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The Rolling Stones

50 GREATEST RIFFS

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THE NEW ALBUM LICK BY LICK

21 WAYS TO PLAY BETTER RHYTHM

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Welcome…

Total Guitar recently published a poll on guitarworld.com in a bid to find out the guitar-playing public's views on the greatest ever Rolling Stones riff. Now, we've done a few of these polls over the last few years and, usually, between us, team TG can make a fairly good guess as to what will appear in any top 10. In most cases the top three or five are, well, I don't want to say "obvious," but the biggest, most popular songs do tend to rise to the top. This month, however, our Stones poll gave us a few surprises, particularly with the number one track. I won't put any spoilers here, but former *Guitar Techniques* editor Neville Marten's rundown of the songwriting and guitar playing in the top 10 tracks is a great read.

We also take you track by track through the band's latest album, *Hackney Diamonds*, profiling Keith and Ronnie's guitar playing. And we have a few tips for playing in Keith's trademark five-string open G tuning. You'll also find one of the biggest tutorials we've created in a while, with 21 tab/audio examples to help you improve your rhythm playing in loads of different styles.

There's plenty more in the mag for your edification, too. You'll find interviews with G N' R's Richard Fortus, Foo Fighters' Chris Shiflett, blues wunderkind Christone "Kingfish" Ingram and more, as well as reviews of gear from Fender, Gibson and Boss, plus songs to learn by Queen, The Police and Rival Sons. It's a packed issue!

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see you next month!

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

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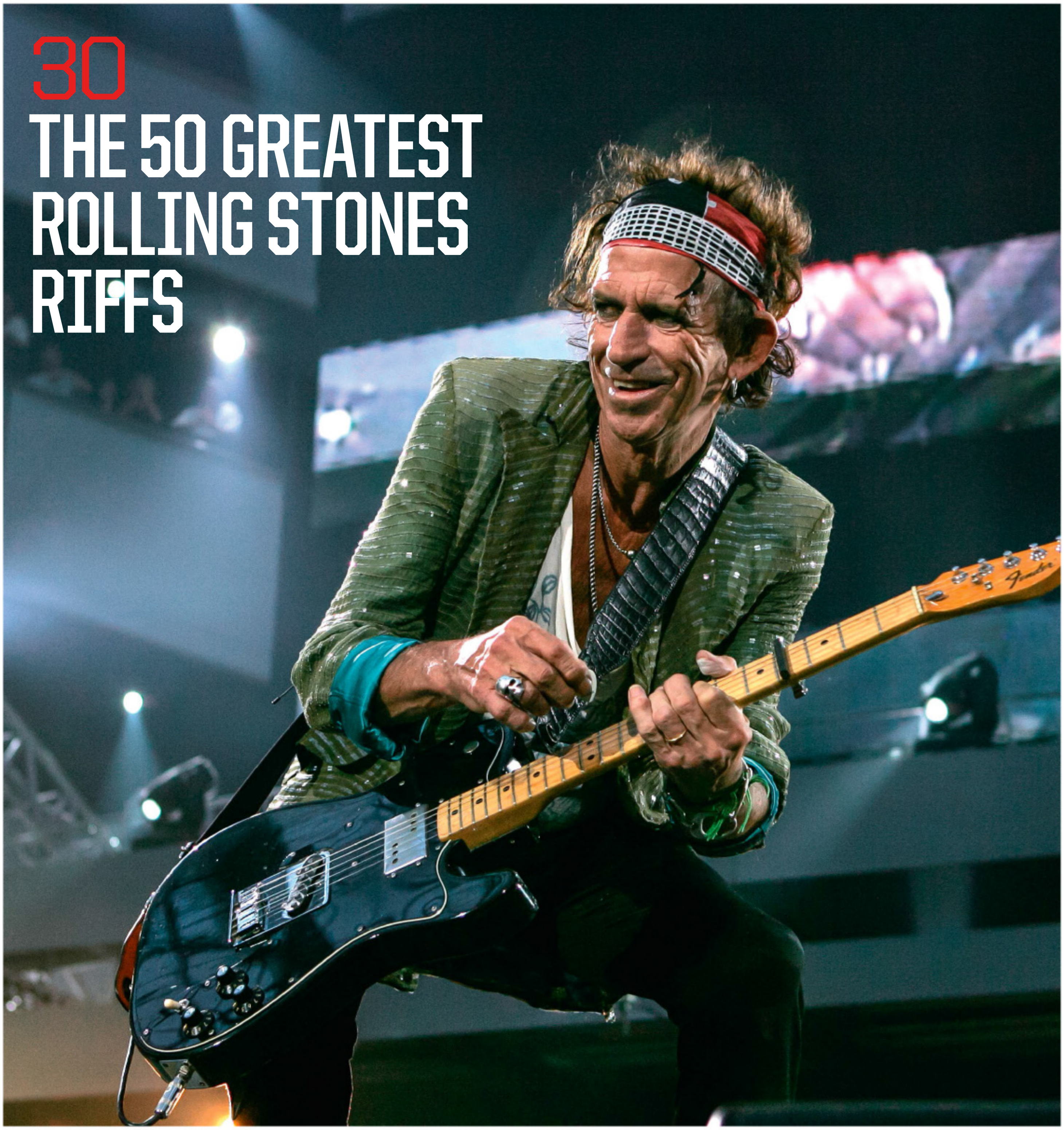

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THE 50 GREATEST ROLLING STONES RIFFS

Cover image Larry Hulst/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images

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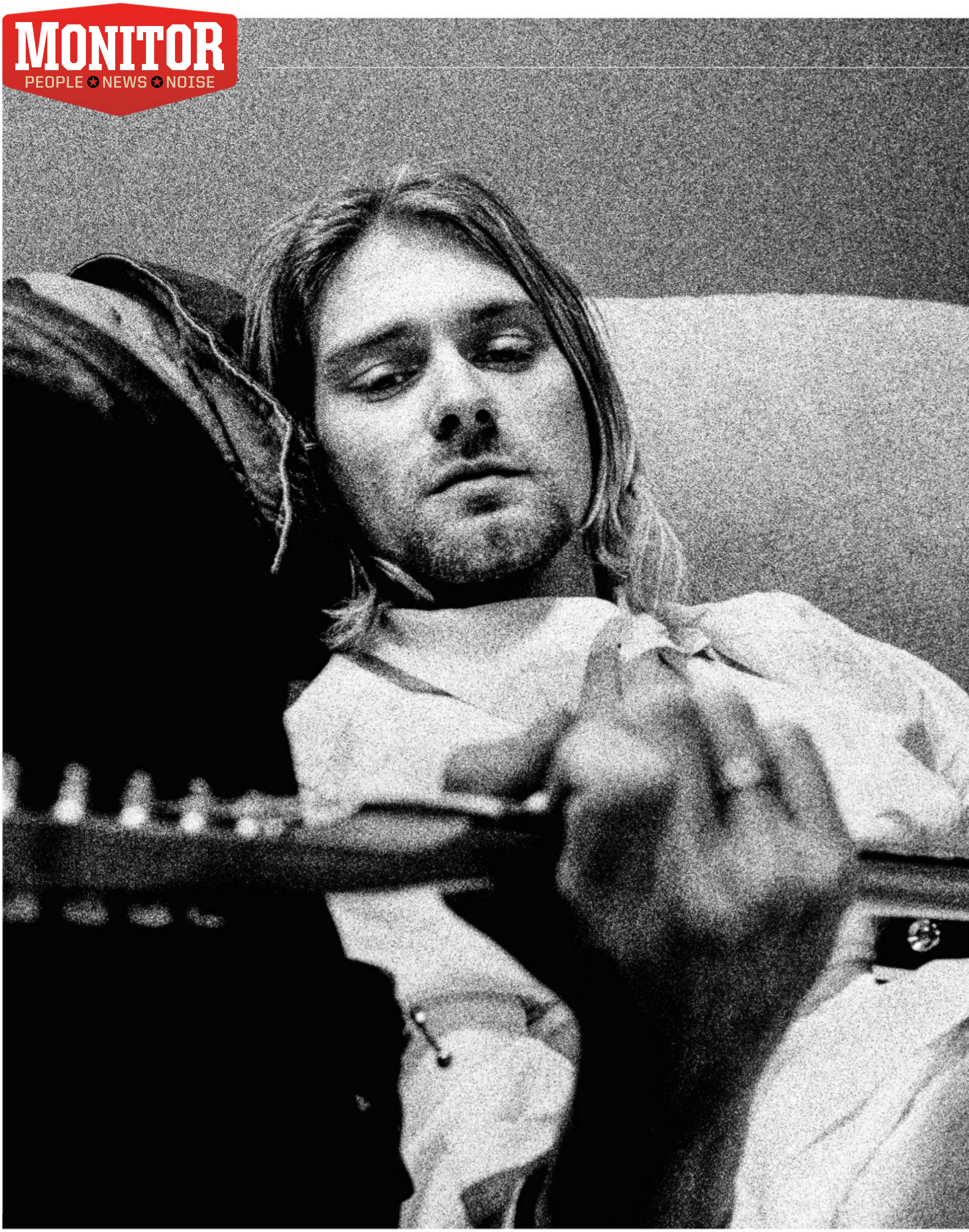


Words Stan Bull Photo Steve Gullick

DEEP DIVE

Ready to feel old? September marked the 30th (yes) anniversary of *In Utero*, Nirvana's final studio album, released just over six months before the tragic death of singer/guitarist Kurt Cobain. To commemorate this seminal grunge release, Polydor are reissuing the album in a variety of formats, including a Super Deluxe, eight-LP box set, which features a newly-remastered version of the album, bonus studio tracks and B-sides, live recordings, a 48-page book, 24-page fanzine, stickers and more.

Recorded in Cannon Falls, Minnesota with producer Steve Albini, *In Utero* was something of an artistic rebellion against the commercial juggernaut that was 1991's multi-platinum *Nevermind*, and was supposedly much closer to Cobain's vision for the group than their previous release. An abrasive and at times impenetrable album, *In Utero* nevertheless contains smatterings of vocal harmonies, strong melodies and displays of vulnerability that made Cobain a hero for the alt-rock generation.

For guitar players less familiar with the album, there is plenty to enjoy as *In Utero* is replete with distorted riffs, atonal solos, ear-splitting feedback and even some melodic arpeggios and acoustic chord work. The remastered versions of lead single *Heart-Shaped Box* and *Scentless Apprentice* – perhaps Nirvana's heaviest ever song – have never sounded better, while last month's Open-mic Songbook track *All Apologies* is one of the best examples of the transcendent loud-quiet-loud dynamic that defined much of the '90s.

Elsewhere, the gentle acoustic strums of *Pennyroyal Tea* and *Dumb* are something of a precursor to the band's legendary *MTV Unplugged In New York* set, and the album's often overlooked, jam-heavy hidden track *Gallons Of Rubbing Alcohol Flow Through The Strip* finds Cobain at his most playful, cheekily suggesting "One more solo?!", before tearing into a punishingly noisy lead break with gleeful abandon.

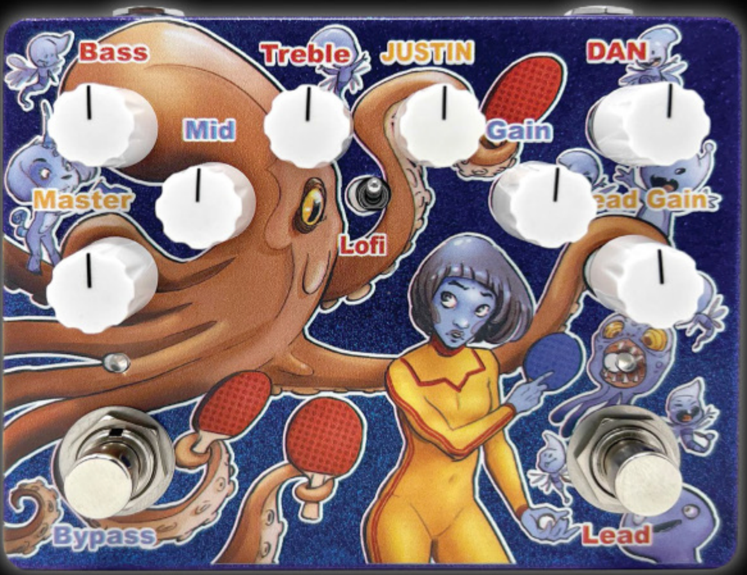
Other gems found in the box set include the sedate *Marigold*, the *Nevermind*-recalling *Sappy* (which features something resembling a conventional solo for Cobain), and the infamous *I Hate Myself And Want To Die*, the song that reportedly inspired Noel Gallagher to write Oasis' *Live Forever*. There are also two full unreleased live albums as well as various studio outtakes for those wishing to explore the album's creative gestation.

Kurt predominantly recorded *In Utero* with his sunburst 1965 Fender Jaguar, complete with custom-fitted DiMarzio pickups, as well as his Stella 12-string acoustic and Albini's all-aluminium Veleno guitar. Looking to recreate Kurt's tone? Get yourself a Fender Jaguar with humbuckers, a Fender Twin Reverb amp and an assortment of pedals including (or similar to) a Boss DS-2 Turbo Distortion, an Electro Harmonix Small Clone and a Tech21 SansAmp. Flannel shirt optional.

In Utero: 30th Anniversary Edition is out now.

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



Hawkins Brothers Audio
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PEDAL

“FOR ROCK GUITAR TONES, THIS THING IS SERIOUSLY PHENOMENAL!”

JUSTIN AND DAN HAWKINS FROM **THE DARKNESS** HAVE UNVEILED THEIR VERY FIRST SIGNATURE OVERDRIVE UNDER THE NAME **HAWKINS BROTHERS AUDIO**…

Until now, The Darkness have rarely dabbled in the world of signature gear – from a very small run of Gibson Les Paul Customs made for Justin Hawkins and a handful of lucky collectors back in 2004 to the singer/guitarist’s Laney JH3000 amplifiers of 2021, which were only produced for the man himself. That all changes this year with the launch of Hawkins Brothers Audio and the Permission To Land overdrive, capturing all the world-conquering tones from the album that put them on the map.

As well as bespoke artwork from Chiara Mazzoni, the pedals will feature dual paths for Justin and Dan, respectively – one more distorted and high-gain and the other more crunchy and amp-like, which can then be isolated or blended together. There’s also a bypass button, a three-band EQ, a button to engage the Lead Boost and a LoFi switch for that instantly recognisable *I Believe In A Thing Called Love* vintage radio intro. Here, the brothers explain more about how the idea came about and what to expect…

How did plans for this pedal take shape?

Dan: Funnily enough, it was you [TG’s Amit Sharma] who put us in touch with David Karon from Distortion Inc. and [Kirk Hammett co-owned company] KHDK, saying he had a proposal. Then we brought in our guitar tech Ian ‘Softy’ Norfolk to help it move along. We were sent some of their existing pedals and the first thing I noticed was that these guys make some serious stuff. I was impressed and it made sense to look into what we could do together.

Once you decided it was an idea worth pursuing, what exactly did you hope to achieve with it?

Justin: The idea of it was to simulate the sounds from *Permission To Land*. There are two different sides, there’s the Dan side and then my side, which was really important. It needed to have not just one but both of our sounds built in.

Dan: That was the gist, to get all of the sounds from our first album out of one pedal. As well as helping people mimic our sounds, it had to be good enough to go beyond that and become its own thing too. If I didn’t feel it sounded exceptional, I just wouldn’t have bothered. But we’re putting it out under Hawkins Brothers Audio and we’re both really looking forward to hearing what people do with it.

So what does it sound like and how did you make sure it was voiced correctly?

Justin: Well, it sounds exactly like our first album, which is probably the album I’m most proud of! Honestly, when it comes to rock guitar tones, I have to say this thing is seriously phenomenal…

Dan: We had the prototypes for the gain stages and boost sent separately to my studio, before they existed together in one pedal. I had the perfect opportunity to test everything out because I’ve got loads of different amps here – from AC30s to both valve and valveless Marshalls, as well as flat-sounding Fender twins. Sometimes you have to plug into whatever is there, hoping to dial your sound in from a pretty flat source. I thought ‘Okay, here we go, let’s try to get my sound out of the first amp I could see!’ And it probably took me about 30 seconds, which was great.

Now I can turn up to any gig, get given any kind of clean Fender or Vox amp and still have my main sound sorted through just one pedal. We did the same for Justin, which was even easier. And then there’s the boost section – my god, does that thing sound good. I had it on my main ’board just as a separate boost before we’d even gone into production. Basically, the final [product] sounds awesome… It’s the best front-end amp pedal I’ve ever heard.

Amit Sharma

Fender
MUSTANG
Fender
JAGUAR

GUITARS

FENDER VINTERA II

Fender's Vintera range returns for its second incarnation, offering as close-to-vintage specs as possible at a more affordable price point. This time, there are a whopping 11 additions to the line-up covering all the Fender classics: '50s, '60s and '70s Strats, '50s Nocaster, '60s Telecaster, '60s Telecaster Thinline and '70s Telecaster Deluxe. Outside of the two famous shapes we get a Competition Mustang (in two finishes), '70s Jaguar, '50s Jazzmaster, and the in-betweener Bass VI. That's a lot of spec to explore, but common themes include alder bodies, 7.25" fingerboard radii and a whole host of period-correct finishes and pickup voicings. We'll be reviewing some soon, but for now, head to Fender's website to check out the full range.

GUITAR

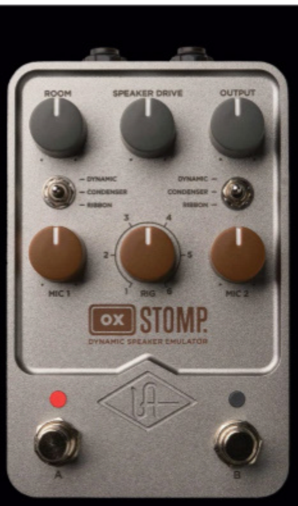
EPIPHONE SG BONAMASSA

When it comes to replicating vintage guitars, Joe Bonamassa has a fair few reference points to choose from. This time, he's teamed up with Epiphone for a limited edition recreation of his 1963 Gibson SG Custom. Starting with the Dark Cherry Red finish (a rare find in itself for a Custom of the original era), it also boasts a smooth neck heel, block inlays, a Maestro Vibrola and of course, three humbuckers. These are Epiphone Probucker 2 (neck and middle) and 3 (bridge) models, wired traditionally to a three-way switch and dual tone/volume controls. It comes in an Epiphone hard case stamped with Joe's Nerdville branding and lined in Goldenrod inside.

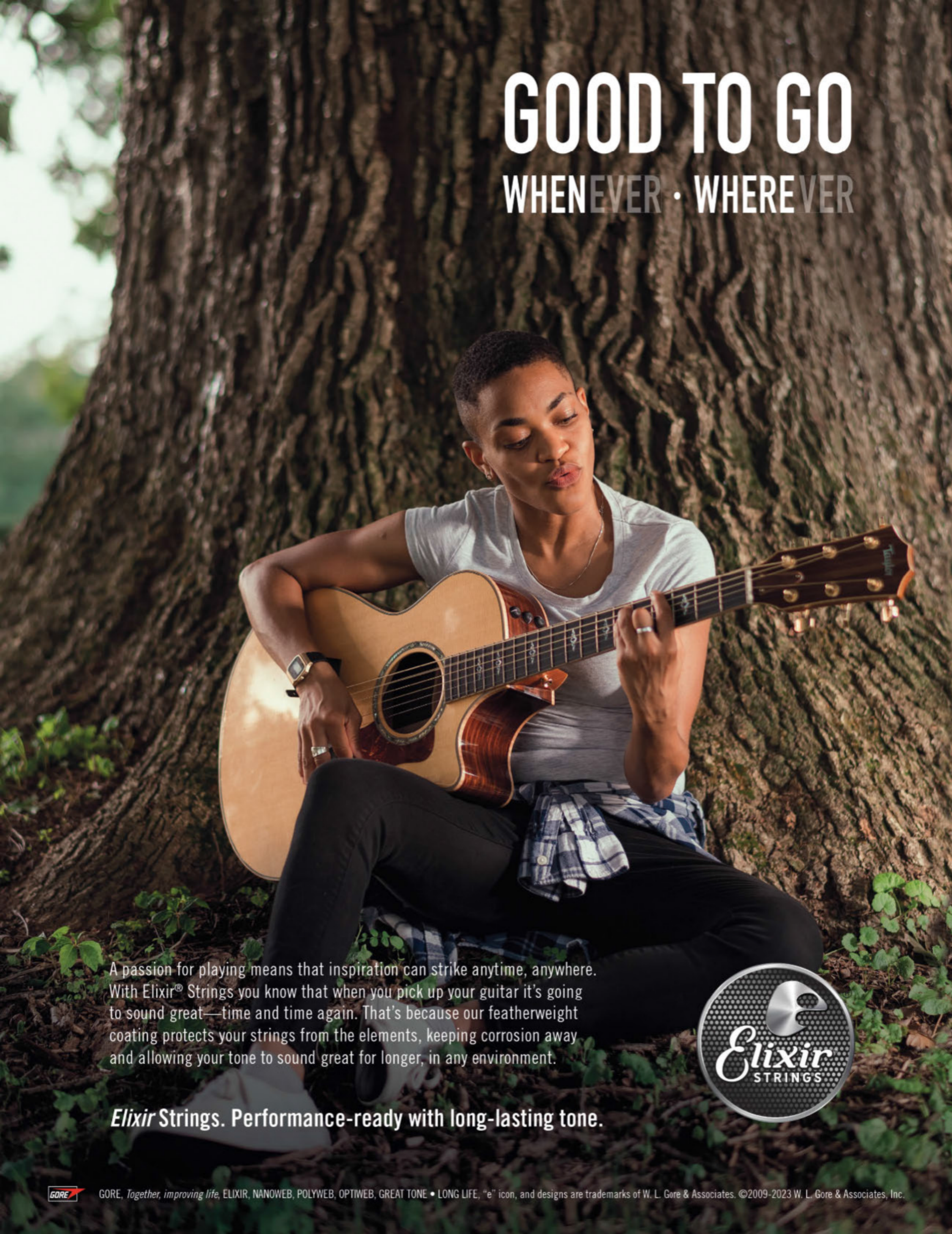
Epiphone
CUSTOM

PEDAL

UNIVERSAL AUDIO OX STOMP



Continuing the mission to make pro-sounding mic'd guitar tones available to anyone, Universal Audio has announced the OX Stomp Dynamic Speaker Emulator. This stomper is designed to sit between your pedalboard, modeller, or even your amp and whatever destination you're sending it to (recording interface, PA etc). It comes packed with tone-shaping options including 22 speaker types and six microphones. But the secret lies in UA's dynamic room modelling, which it says offers "jaw-dropping speaker, cab and room emulations far beyond common IR loaders". Also on board are UA FX including compression, a plate reverb, chorus, flanger, three delays and an EQ. The whole lot can be edited using the UAFX Control app, too.



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Tone Master
FR-12
POWER
VOLUME
TREBLE
MIDDLE
BASS
Fender

UP CLOSE

Tone Master tech

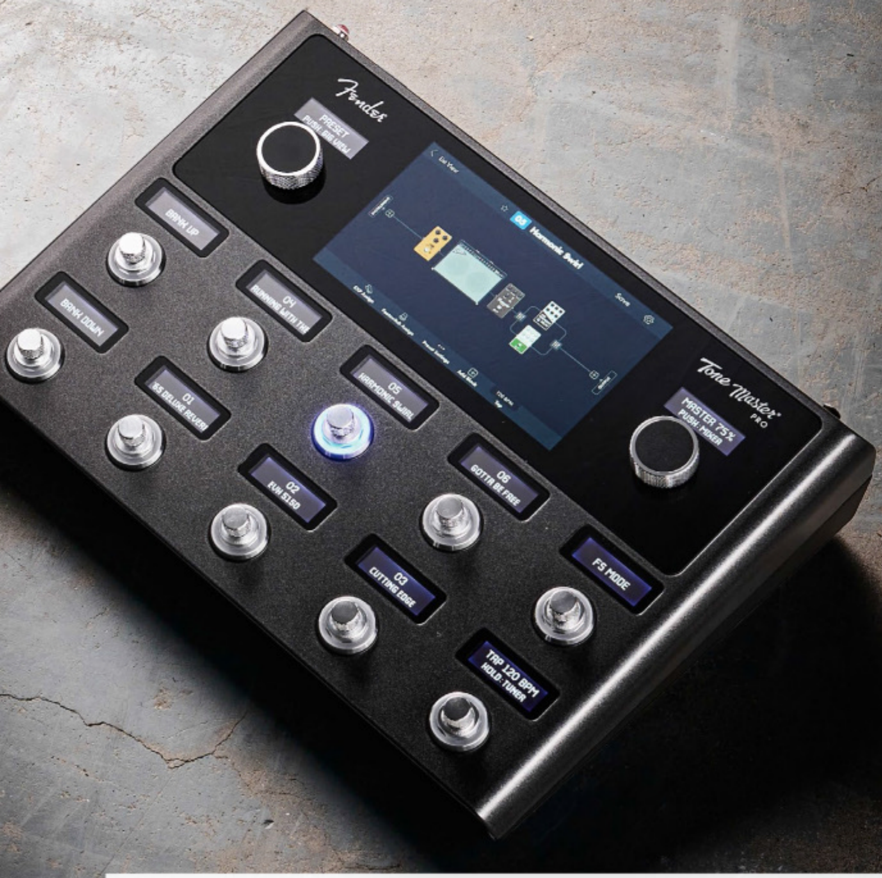
Fender has incorporated over 100 amps and effects into the Tone Master Pro, including classic Fender amps, an official EVH 5150 and more.

Connectivity

With more sockets than a mechanic's drawer, the Tone Master Pro is set to send your signal wherever you need it, on stage or in the studio.

Call a cab

The Tone Master FR-10 and FR-12 cabinets offer FRFR speakers for playing the Tone Master Pro or any other digital modeller/pedalboard amp emulation through.



Words Stuart Williams Photography Phil Barker

GAME OF TONES

Fender brings its Tone Master digital modelling to a comprehensive floor-based solution

If there's one thing to know about the guitar amp market, it's that your options are vast. Now, Fender has expanded those choices further with the introduction of the Tone Master Pro (£1,649) – an all-new, floor-based digital modeller based around its Tone Master technology.

This time, however, we get over 100 amp and effects models (including all of the existing Tone Master models, the first-ever EVH-approved 5150 III emulation and more), over 6,000 Fender-made cab/mic impulse responses and a 60-second looper. There's plenty of hands-on control too, thanks to an easy-to-navigate colour touchscreen, 10 footswitches which also double as rotary encoders, and deeper editing via Fender's Tone Master Pro Control app (over USB).

It's packing sockets too, with an XLR mic/line input, guitar input, a pair of stereo outputs (inc XLR), aux input, headphones, multiple footswitch connections and MIDI I/O. In addition to this, there are no fewer than four effects loops, a micro SD slot and USB socket – the latter driving a 4x4 audio interface.

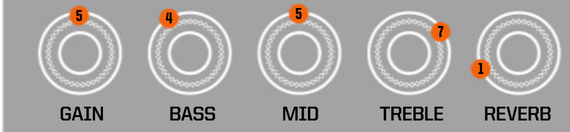
If you don't need a lie down after all that, Fender has also launched a pair of FRFR cabinets to accompany the TMP. The Tone Master FR-10 (£469) and FR-12 (£519) are designed to provide a full-range, flat response, making them the perfect lightweight solution for amplifying your Tone Master Pro (or any other amp emulator) on stage. We'll be checking it out in full shortly!

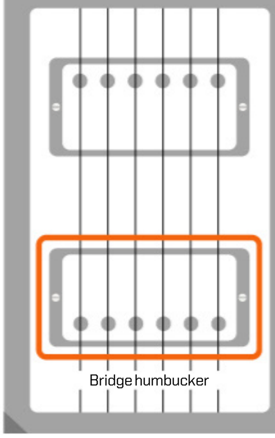
RIFF OF THE MONTH

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
- ✔ Pull-offs
- ✔ Finger vibrato
- ✔ G blues scale

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL **OVERDRIVE**





Scott Holiday has been playing *Sweet Life* on his mini-humbucker-loaded Gibson Firebird and Custom Gretsch Falcon loaded with TV Jones Super'Trons. Both have a brighter top end than traditional PAF-style units. Use your guitar's bridge pickup through a crunchy mid gain overdrive tone. If you have a fuzz pedal, use that, but if not, boost your amp's gain and treble slightly to add a fuzzy edge. The recording also features an octave effect, which automatically adds an octave below each of the played notes to thicken up the sound.

RIVAL SONS

Sweet Life

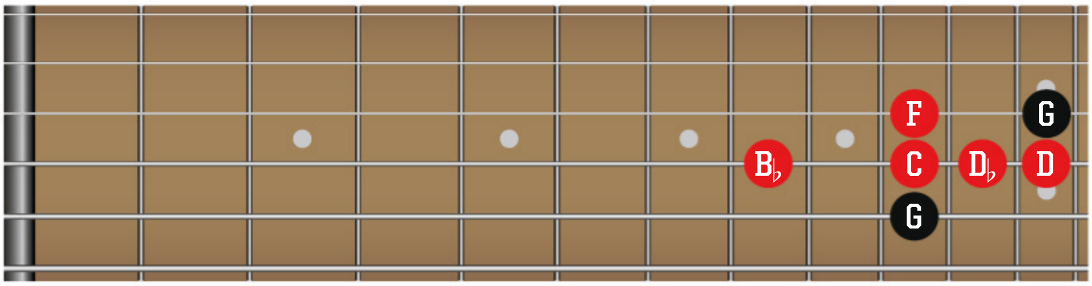
Featuring on the upcoming Rival Sons release *Lightbringer*, guitarist Scott Holiday plays the single-note riff of *Sweet Life* with a fuzzy octave tone.

Start with your first finger on the G root, then play the G octave note with your third finger. Next, pull off with a slight downward and outward finger motion to the F note using your first finger. Now use your third finger tip to play D on the fourth string, then roll your finger across to the third string to play the G octave again; this time with the front part of your finger. This rolling technique is to help separate the two single notes so they don't sound like a doublestop. Use the same third finger rolling motion between the C and G notes on the fourth and fifth strings. Finish the riff with a descending, chromatic D, D♭ and C and add some vibrato to the notes.

CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00–0:18
Tempo: 90bpm
Key/scale: G blues scale
Main techniques: Pull-offs, vibrato, finger rolling

Total Guitar



The riff is in the key of G minor (G A B♭ C D E♭ F), but the notes used are from G blues scale, which you can think of as G minor pentatonic with an added ♭5th interval D♭ note (G B♭ C D♭ D F). The ♭5 is known as the 'blue' note and adds a pleasant moment of tension to the end of the riff.

Photo Rob Monk

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"FOR MY SOUND, HUMBUCKERS ARE WHERE IT'S AT"

Words Amit Sharma **Photos** Jen Rosenstein/Colin Hart

"BLUES IS LIFE"

Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram is digging deep into the blues, with influences ranging from the old masters to Eric Gales and Prince. His golden rule as a guitarist: "Don't place too much emphasis on perfection..."

MODERN ART
"You have to talk about the blues of right now," Christone says.

There are many reasons why *Live In London*, the latest release from American guitar wunderkind Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram, is the kind of album that's guaranteed to thrill blues fans around the world. The Mississippi-born 24 year-old conjures some truly electrifying tones out of his signature Telecaster Deluxe and sings beautifully with an abundance of heart and soul. But what's arguably more noticeable than anything else is that he really, really means every note that comes out of him…

"I try to talk about the modern problems we have today, because that's what the blues is all about," he says. "For me, it's all these unnecessary wars, unarmed people getting killed and stuff like that. You have to talk about the blues of right now. And a big part of it also comes understanding the history and respecting the people who came before you. On top of that, you somehow have to find your own voice. The way I look at it, blues is life. It's not just some genre of music… To me, it's much more than that."

While there is no shortage of blues players emanating from every corner of the globe, it's this particular area of expertise that helps seat Ingram at the very forefront of the next generation of talent. He lives it and breathes it, and he's done his very best to understand it from a musical and socio-political standpoint.

The man who would go on to earn himself the nickname 'Kingfish' came from a musical family and started out on bass. The nearby Delta Blues Museum ran an Arts And Education after-school programme which introduced him to the revolutionary music of B.B. King, Albert King, Freddie King and Son House. By the time he was 13 years old, he'd decided to deep-dive even further, switching over to electric guitar to further his education into the artform that would eventually become his life, learning as much from its dark history as he did its psalms of hope. This is something he feels a lot of modern players seem to neglect…

"A lot of folk are ignorant, they don't understand the true meaning of the blues," he shrugs. "People watch a couple of Stevie Ray Vaughan videos and think all they need is distortion and fast licks! But that's not true. You have to go back and appreciate why this music was made by our forefathers. You have to understand this music was born out of pain and suffering. It wasn't all about guitar solos or 'my baby left me'! That's where a lot of people go wrong – they haven't tried to find out or understand what the blues is all about. It's cool, whatever, but I feel like people should learn the history before they go into something properly and think they totally 'get' it."

It only takes a quick listen to *Live In London* to understand that Ingram wholeheartedly gets it. And all that attention to detail has certainly paid off. He's become one of the most exciting

KING POWER
"When I'm on stage, I avoid playing the same exact solo every night."

names in modern blues, and a natural successor to current giants like Joe Bonamassa, Gary Clark Jr. and Eric Gales – the latter of which he considers to be a Hendrix-rivalling talent. "I've always been big into Hendrix," he says, "but when I found Eric Gales' music, that levelled up the Hendrix sound for me!" Naturally, when a guitarist discovers an otherworldly character who radiates charisma like Gales, someone with no shortage of flair and finesse, it's then time to put in the hours and do more homework…

"I learned a lot of my faster pentatonic runs from Eric," he smiles. "There's one I call 'the pentatonic staircase' because I saw a video of Eric Gales when I was younger where he called it his 'up the stairs, down the stairs' lick. It's where he crosses positions and comes back down the same line. I try to emulate that for certain runs. Eric's so amazing, I love all his chord voicings. When I'm learning, I sit down, listen and try to play along. The same goes for Lance Lopez, Johnny Winter and jazz players like Charlie Christian and Wes Montgomery… or even musicians who didn't play guitar, like Charlie Parker."

"PEOPLE WATCH A COUPLE OF STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN VIDEOS AND THINK ALL THEY NEED IS DISTORTION AND FAST LICKS"

As you'd expect from someone paying respect to such a wide pool of greats, Christone also enjoys cross-pollinating his rootsy early influences with more contemporary sounds, introducing elements of hip-hop, RnB and hard rock. This was something he learned from Prince – a man he cites as brilliantly "unique and diverse" and someone who "just played what felt right" with little care for the perceived boundaries of any given genre. Similarly, on the new recordings you can hear Christone staying true to himself and walking his own path, with his signature guitar plugged into a Fender Twin and no more than three choice pedals – a Marshall ShredMaster, a Cry Baby Mini Wah and a TC Electronic PolyTune – running in front…

"I did try the Strat single-coil thing for a minute, but for my sound, humbuckers are where it's at," he admits, explaining why he mainly stuck with Les Paul-style guitars at the beginning of his career. "I think it came from listening to a lot of Gary Moore. So when I started talking to Fender about putting out a model, I knew it had to be something like a Tele Deluxe. I needed something that could give me a really hot sound without needing to try too hard, but also something that I could turn down to get clean."

As its name might suggest, the ShredMaster is a pretty high gain pedal aimed at heavy metal headbangers. So how exactly is Ingram making it work in a blues context?

"I tend to prefer really bassy distorted tones," he notes. "I don't like shrilly sounds with too much treble. I prefer more of a natural warmth, which is exactly what this pedal does, even if I don't need all of that gain. I got mine while I was out in Australia. Before that point I was using a ProCo Lil' Rat, which is another darker drive, but I found they didn't really hold up as well. The ShredMaster is a really dope pedal and it's what you're mainly hearing on the live record. I might switch it out at some point, I just got the Atomic Overdrive from a company in Nashville called XAct Tone. I will test it out at a few shows and see how it sounds. I don't use much but my pedalboard is always changing, I can't get stuck on one thing!"

Referencing albums such as B.B. King's *Live In Cook County Jail* and Stevie Wonder's *Natural Wonder*, Christone believes the best live releases are the ones where the players on stage follow their hearts, reacting to their surroundings and existing in the present. It's precisely the same course of action he takes with his own performances, using the songs as vehicles for open reflection and spontaneous self-discovery…

"When I'm up on stage, I improvise to avoid playing the same exact solo every night," he says. "There may be certain licks here and there, but I prefer to just make it up and feel it. It's better to not overthink it or place too much emphasis on perfection. That stuff can be a distraction. Sometimes us guitar players can get caught up in our heads. I just want to go out there, have fun and do my thing, you know?"

***Live In London* is out now.**

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TELECASTER DELUXE

Kingfish's Blues Icons

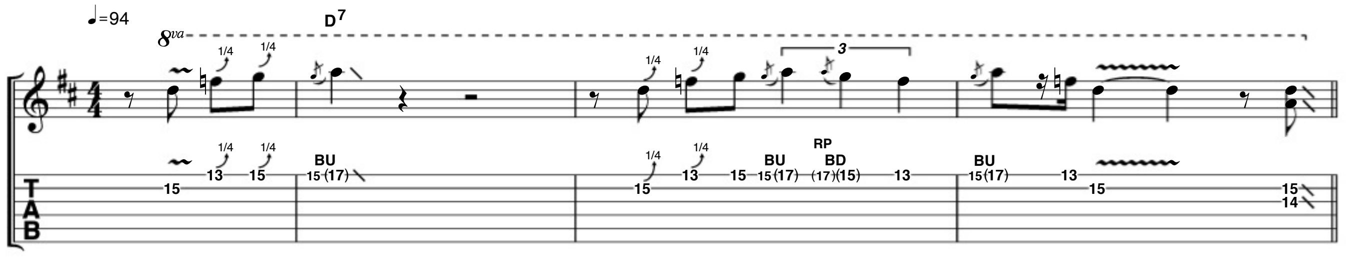
Want to play the blues like Christone? Then learn the way he did as we look at the styles of five of his biggest influences

At just 24, Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram is at the forefront of the newest generation of blues greats. Speaking to TG, he told us about the players who most influenced his playing.

"I've always been big into Hendrix, but when I found Eric Gales' music, that levelled up the Hendrix sound for me! So he has to be in there. Gary Moore has a harder-hitting take on the blues. And I love the three Kings, though Albert was always my favourite because of how raw and gritty he was. Don't get me wrong, I love B.B. and Freddie too, but Albert always had this extra something."

Here we take a look at the playing styles of these greats. As you play through the examples, think about the different aspects of phrasing. Some examples will reward fluid, vocal-like bending, while others work best with blazing speed and high-gain tones. With that said, as with a lot of blues soloing, there's a lot of room for experimenting – so try reworking these examples at different tempos, in different keys and adding in some of your own ideas, too.

01 ALBERT KING bit.ly/tg377audio



Right away, you can hear most of the notes are pushed (or pulled, in Albert's case, thanks to his preference for using a right-handed guitar flipped over to play left-handed) slightly sharp – not an unusual occurrence in blues, but Albert did it more than most. The sliding doublestop at the end was one of Albert's favourite ways to finish a phrase.

Guitars and backing Richard Barrett Photo Colin Hart

02 B.B. KING

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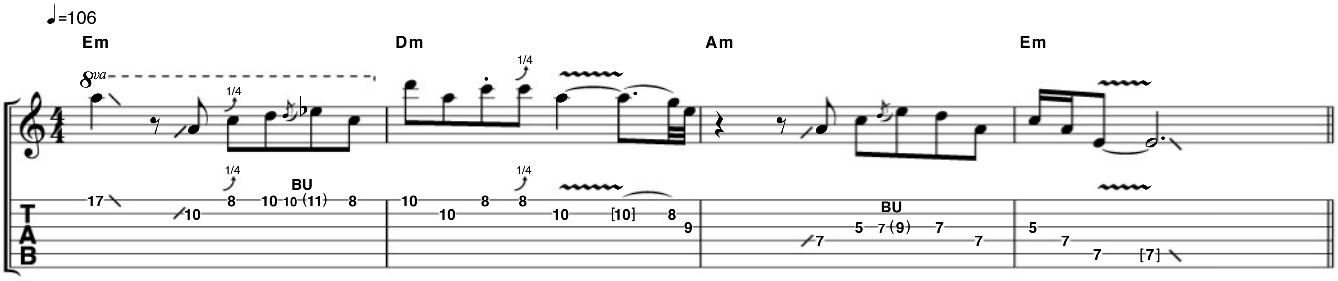

Watch out for the ending to bar 2 in our B.B. King-inspired lick. Though only two notes, it's deceptively tricky. Phrases like these show that B.B. would often reach for shapes/patterns that sounded good to his ear, rather than what fell most easily under the fingers.

03 FREDDIE KING

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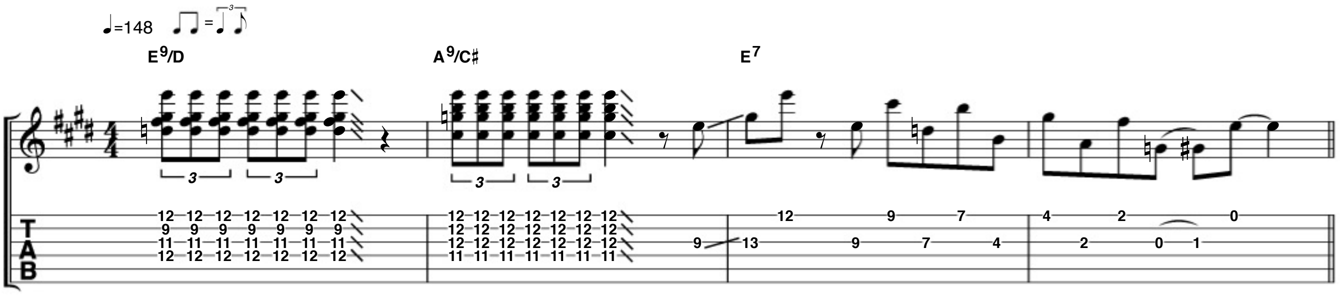

These jazzy chords are played with attitude and attack, leading to a descending line of doublestops similar in nature to those in the previous example, cleverly outlining a melody while also filling out the sound with a second note. Freddie would use thumb and forefinger to play lines like this, but a hybrid of pick and fingers work well too.

04 ERIC GALES

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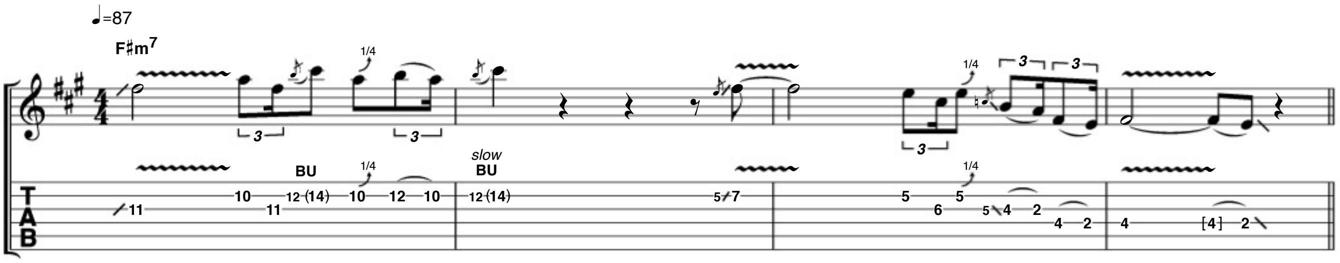

Played with a slightly swung feel, this example consists of two melodic phrases – both using the F♯ minor pentatonic scale (F♯ A B C♯ E). In a simple, but effective device, the first one ascends and the second descends. Watch for slides, vibrato and the occasional quarter-tone bend – which means you should bend the string slightly sharp.

05 GARY MOORE

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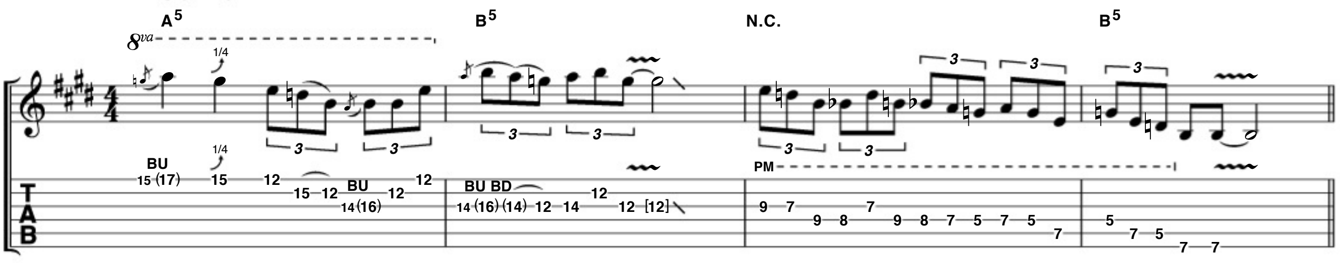


This pentatonic lick makes extensive use of triplets (great for blues and swinging blues-rock), emphasised further with palm muting in the last two bars. Gary would often use this technique to give definition to the lower strings – very helpful with a high-gain tone. Simply rest your pick hand on the strings where they meet your guitar's bridge.

ORANGE
Marshall

Words Ellie Rogers

“I’ve been told that I play guitar wrong!”

A self-taught player, Serena Cherry of **Svalbard** is a key figure in modern metal

Serena Cherry puts it simply. “Metal is my outlet for anything that’s troubling me,” says the lead guitarist, frontwoman and principal songwriter for Bristolian quartet Svalbard. “If you’re having a bad day, metal is the thing that lifts you up and helps you release all those negative emotions.”

These words will no doubt ring true for anyone who’s ever experienced the uniquely therapeutic effect that plugging in, turning up and thrashing out some ultra-savage riffs can have on both the heart and mind. But the band’s brutal yet vulnerable new album, The *Weight Of The Mask*, is about more than just personal catharsis for its author. “The album is about depression and how isolating mental illness can be,” explains Serena. “Something I’m really keen to do in Svalbard is create that resonance that will strike a chord with people. They can listen and not feel alone.”

Serena herself first found solace and inspiration in the world of heavy music when she was just 12 years old and a fan of Slipknot and Fear Factory. After a brief period of wanting to be a drummer, she realised her true calling involved picks rather than sticks, and she began teaching herself the basics on quite possibly the least hardcore axe≈you could imagine…

“My sister had a little three-quarter-size nylon classical guitar in her bedroom,” she recalls. “I used to sneak in while she was out and try to figure out how to play Slayer on it!”

A morning paper round then paid for a “terrible” knock-off Flying V, before a Saturday job at the local guitar store really started to peak her interest in higher-end gear – with her “first proper good metal guitar” arriving in the form of a Jackson Soloist.

All the while, Serena followed her instincts to figure out “all the metal techniques” herself – never receiving a single guitar lesson. “I’ve been told that I play guitar wrong and that I hold a pick wrong because I hold it with three fingers,” explains the now highly conversant guitarist, whose self-directed approach has led to some very effective if not slightly idiosyncratic methods. “I do remember using a 2p coin as a plectrum back then as well,” she laughs.

Nowadays, she’s upgraded to .73mm Dunlop yellow Tortex picks, simply because they’re easy to spot when dropped on dimly lit stages. “That’s literally the reason for using them,” she insists. “I’ve tried the smaller, stubbier ones which a lot of metal players use – that maybe enable greater speed and accuracy – but I’m so used to these now.”

But neither speed nor accuracy are a problem for Serena, whose trademark technique is wicked fast tremolo picking – and there’s plenty to be found on the new album. “My pro tip for tremolo picking is to anchor with your pinky finger along your pickup or on that top string,” she shares. “A lot of people will probably say that’s wrong, but for me, that’s what enables the consistency. Once you’ve got the consistency, then you can start thinking about the speed!”

Before hitting the studio, Serena vowed to push herself in terms of creativity as well as speed within her lead work, mining inspiration in equal measure from “unpredictable” soloists like Symphony X’s Michael Romeo and the *Final Fantasy* video game soundtrack. The result is an abundance of “bittersweet” melodic outings that deftly and deliberately swerve the common cliches of metal soloing.

“A lot of solos in metal definitely have a formula,” she suggests. “They’ll come in with a triumphant couple of notes, and then progress onto the really speedy shreddy part and then eventually calm down into the big epic ending. I really like it when a solo doesn’t do that. To me, a solo really hits home when you don’t hear the magic coming.”

Speaking of which, Serena’s journey in guitar hasn’t been without a few magical twists of its own. Years after falling in love with that Soloist in her teens, she became officially endorsed by Jackson Guitars last summer in what she describes as a “really full circle” development, and one that “doesn’t feel real”. Throughout the new album, you’ll hear the substantial tones of her Purple Burst Jackson Pro Series Monarkh SCP, which is loaded with Seymour Duncan humbuckers for what Serena calls “that real singing sensation in the sustain”.

Tonally, she’s big into reverb and delay, and uses Boss RV-6, RV-5 and DD-7 pedals as well as her favourite for atmospherics, the Strymon BigSky. “The shimmer setting heavily dominates a lot of my lead parts and it just has that almost orchestral quality to it,” she effuses.

A bombshell note to end on, Serena reveals that even her most soul-shakingly heavy tones are achieved without one of the bare necessities of most metallers’ rigs. “I never use distortion pedals,” she smiles. “I always go with the distortion on the amp and we used a Bad Cat for the album, which sounds amazing!”

The Weight Of The Mask is out now.

CHERRY PICKING
Serena in full flow

> “A SOLO REALLY HITS HOME WHEN YOU DON’T HEAR THE MAGIC COMING…”

Photo Getty

“IF I PLAYED THROUGH CLAPTON’S RIG, I’D STILL SOUND LIKE ME”

Handy tips for better tone – by bluesman **Danny Bryant**

Words Amit Sharma **Photos** Felix Groteloh, Will Ireland, Kevin Nixon, Getty

British blues supremo Danny Bryant definitely knows a thing or two about getting everything you can out of a Strat-style guitar, to the point where he finds pedals often get in the way of what he's trying to achieve. With new album *Rise* recently released, he shares his tips for tones and techniques…

You clearly love to experiment with your tone controls and different pickup positions…
The tone controls are probably the most overlooked thing you'll find on any guitar. A lot of players out there think those two knobs are obsolete, but you can do so much with them, especially in combination with your pickup selector. I like fatness of a neck pickup but the one next to it, position four; helps me mellow out the chords. In other situations I might want to cut through so I'll go to the bridge pickup, also known as first position. But sometimes that can be a bit bright on a Strat-style guitar, so you use the tone control to tame that as needed.

The second position, next to the bridge pickup, often feels like the most glassy.
Yeah! That one in between the bridge and middle is what I call the Robert Cray sound. I've seen him live a few times and that seems to be the tone he goes for. It has less bass and sounds more funky, with exactly what you said – a certain kind of glassiness to it. Stevie Ray Vaughan didn't use that position much, but when he did it was really noticeable and it would make certain lines or chords really stick out. He'd combine it with an upstroke rake and it would really cut through."

So which position do you use the least?
I don't really use position three that much, but I was talking to Eric Clapton's tech a few weeks ago and he told me that Eric spends most of his time there. He'll start the gig on the middle pickup and see where it takes him. Maybe I need more time with it!

Another thing you like to do is roll your volume control to create violin swells – how exactly did you come to master that particular technique?
It's an impressive-looking trick but it's very easy. You should rest your little finger, or pinky as the Americans call it, just behind the volume control up and gradually roll it up after striking the note. It's just a motion that you end up getting used to, and ends up in your muscle memory. The thing to remember about violining is that your little finger and pick are working in unison, as two parts of the same movement. But you don't want to hear the note get picked, because that will sound sh*t. You want the note picked and a few milliseconds later you swell into it smoothly. There should be a delay… not as in the effect, as in the timing!

Interestingly, you don't seem to use many effects pedals…
Walter Trout taught me that. He's been like a second father to me for over 30 years. That's probably why I don't use pedals – he tends to use a Mesa/Boogie [head] and let that do most of the work. It's funny, he told me that when he got his first Mesa, there was that printed card at the top telling people how to dial in certain sounds. Well, he set it to 'death metal' just for fun and that's actually the setting he uses to play blues! He uses his volume control to bring it down to a whisper. I tend to do the same with Blackstar amps like the HT Club 50, manipulating my volume knob to clean up for chords and turn up for leads. I'd say the volume control is one of the most important things you can find on a guitar.

What else did you pick up from him?
"Well, he's just a fussy guy when it comes to tone – especially with amps. If it's not a Mesa/Boogie, he won't be happy. He's also very quiet on stage, which is different to most players who mainly want to hear themselves. He doesn't like to hear much of his guitar and actually finds it inhibits him. He says he plays better with more fluidity if he can hear himself distantly in the mix of the band. He's very old school and has always told me tone is in the fingers. And it's true! If I played through Clapton's rig, I'd still sound like me, and if he tried mine, he'd still sound like him. That's not to say you can't get close. I look on YouTube and some players can get so close to Stevie Ray Vaughan, it's just frightening! But for most of us, that's a lifelong quest…

***Rise* is out now.**

> "THE VOLUME CONTROL IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS ON A GUITAR"

POWER OF TWO
"We want that heavy sound," Ben Wells says, "but we're going for two different versions of it".

Words Amit Sharma **Photos** Jimmy Fontaine

"TASTES MIGHT CHANGE, BUT A GREAT GUITAR IS A GREAT GUITAR!"

Gear Acquisition Syndrome is a way of life for **Black Stone Cherry** guitarists Chris Robertson and Ben Wells

Black Stone Cherry are one of those bands that live right on the edge of where hard rock becomes heavy metal, and have built a strong fanbase around the world because of it. On their eighth full-length *Screamin' At The Sky*, they're treading new ground in places, but if you're looking for colossal tones and hard-swinging riffs, then you certainly won't be disappointed. A major factor in all that, say singer/guitarist Chris Robertson and co-guitarist Ben Wells, is how they co-exist as two sides of the same coin…

What's the secret to finding a tone that isn't too soft or too heavy?
Ben: We both want that heavy sound but we're going for two different versions of it. Chris is more vintage-sounding and my tone is a little more modern, I guess.
Chris: We both like different kinds of amplifiers, but the blend of the two creates this unique thing. I go for an old-school modded Marshall kinda tone that pushes the power stage more while Ben likes to drive the preamp harder. His heads have more preamp gain internally than the ones I use.

So which amps have you used most over the years?
Ben: My number one amp, since even before the first record, has been the Peavey 5150. Even before I had any relationship with the people there, I was using that amplifier. It's the sound I was always drawn to. Before we started using digital gear like the Line 6 Helix for our live shows, that's the kind of backline I was requesting for our fly dates.
Chris: The first record was Marshalls. The second was Marshalls, Fenders and Peaveys. On our last record [2020's *The Human Condition*] I used a Splawn, which is essentially a modified Marshall. On the new record I recorded the whole thing with Line 6 Helix Native, using the Friedman Placater sound and 2x12 impulse responses because of how the midrange sits. It was more than good enough for me!

If you could go back in time and give yourself one piece of gear advice, what would it be?
Chris: I would tell myself not to be afraid of using more gain and to experiment more with pedals. Because when we started, I just wanted to be Paul Kossoff – a Les Paul with a wah into a Marshall and nothing else. I'd always be telling myself off for dialling too much gain and back it down! It took a while to break out of that mindset.
I remember when we got over to England and plugged into the Marshalls over there, they were chugging a little harder because of the power.
I remember thinking 'Yeah, I'm gonna turn it up a notch when I get home!'
Ben: We've used all sorts of things, but I keep coming back to the same kind of sound. On the second album I started using Diezels. Then there's the Peavey Invective I used on the last two – it's the signature of Misha Mansoor [of Periphery fame], which I think is a bit underrated but sounds unreal. It can go super heavy but also has incredible cleans. I guess my advice to myself would be to turn down the gain!
Chris: Over the years, we've grown more like each other tonally! Now I like more gain and now Ben likes less!

Chris, you've been working with a lot of British brands recently, from your Peacemaker Bare Knuckle set to your new Chapman signature. Clearly you're a bit of an Anglophile…
Chris: It's been a cool couple of years.

There was an amazing response to those Bare Knuckle humbuckers. I'm working with Chapman because I went to a local store and picked up one of their cheaper models. I took it home, played a show with it and could tell it was badass. After I posted something online, they reached out and the relationship blossomed into the shiny white prototype I've been using live.

The new partnership surprised people as you've been a PRS man for a long time. Are you using both or have you switched endorsements officially?

Chris: I'm still playing whatever feels best. In my UK vault, for example, I've got an American Elite Strat, a Les Paul, a couple of Chapmans and there's some PRS in there, too. Tastes might change but a great guitar is a great guitar at the end of the day. Recently I've been mainly playing maple neck, rosewood fretboard bolt-on guitars and I've got to give some credit to Anthony Sims from Lucky Dog Guitars. I bought one of his Evangelists and it reinvigorated my love for Fender-style guitars. Everything I've played since has been a derivative of good old Leo Fender, who definitely got a thing or two right! I've fallen in love with that stuff again. My first guitar was an Epiphone Telecaster with the batwing headstock, so coming back to T-styles feels full-circle for me.

Ben, you're clearly a fan of Lucky Dog Guitars, too.

Ben: Every time we talk about guitars, that name comes up! It's fantastic to see an independent builder getting the respect they deserve. You can custom order, but he also posts ones that are for public sale and they go quickly! I saw this particular Tele, and Chris even messaged me about it. I told him 'Trust me, I've already sent a message!' It was one of those guitars you buy on cosmetics alone. We've all been guilty of doing that in the past. Sometimes you just have to roll the dice. As soon as I got it, I knew it was perfect. It's been a mainstay for every show.

It's interesting how you've stuck with more mid-tier American-made Les Pauls like Studios and Classics than the higher-end Standards and Customs...

Ben: My first Gibson was a Classic. I cut my teeth on that, which is why I'm drawn to them. I like the hotter pickups, then there's the '60s neck which is skinnier. I also love the finishes – you can get purpley colours like my Classic Premium Plus, which is one of my main guitars. I'm on the lookout for the pink version! In school my dream guitar was an Alpine White Custom. I had one for a minute but it was a little heavy and I couldn't get my hands around the neck like I did the Classic. So I'm waiting on them to put out an Alpine White Classic… when they do, it's game over!

Chris, your PRS SC245 has a P-90 in the neck and a humbucker in the bridge – which is a less typical configuration...

Chris: Yeah, it's cool because it creates huge tonal opportunities. I like unusual configurations, whether it's a humbucker in the bridge and a single-coil in the neck, or the old '72 Tele Custom style with a humbucker in the neck and a single-coil in the bridge. Plus, with coil taps you can get a sh*tload of tones from one guitar. That PRS was built for me and though it's not a Private Stock, it was made by the same team. It's one of the greatest guitars I've ever played. I'll never part with it. Written on the back it says 'Custom built for Chris Robertson', so that one stays!

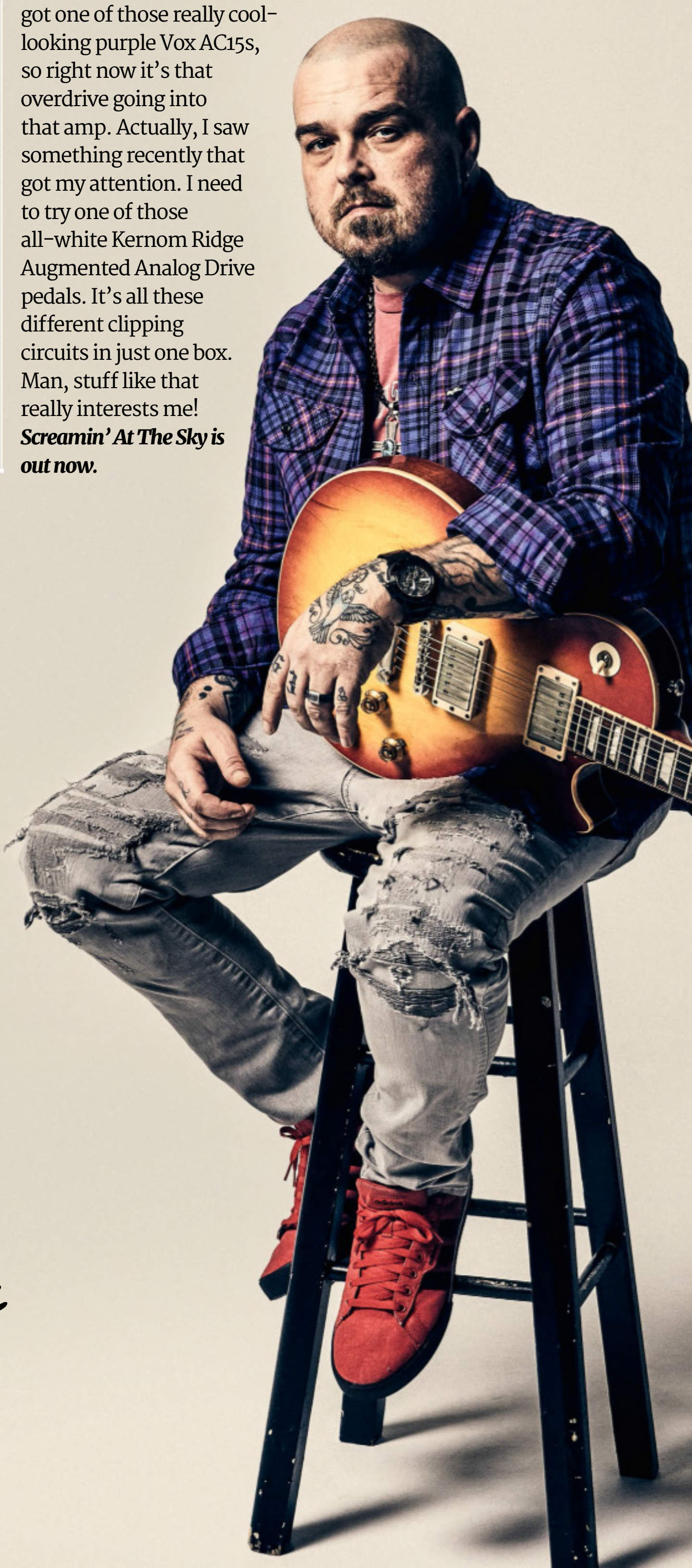
So what are the pedals you couldn't live without right now? And are there any new favourites?

Ben: I love Electro-Harmonix. I have the B9 Organ Machine, they also do synth and piano machines which sound incredible. I recently switched to the MXR talk box. I was using the Rocktron Banshee 2 because it allowed me to use the same amp. I don't want an extra amp just for a damn talk box! The MXR does that too and is a little smaller.

Chris: Live, I'm using digital stuff, but at home my most-used pedals are my ISP Decimator to get rid of noise and this twin reverb pedal made by Westminster Effects called the Chalcedonian. I'll run it in the effects loop of a combo that doesn't have reverb, like a Friedman Dirty Shirley. Another pedal I use a lot is the JHS Fuzz Bender. They make the Angry Charlie, which is my favourite overdrive. My version is the dark brown V2 with the red knobs in a diamond pattern. I just got one of those really cool-looking purple Vox AC15s, so right now it's that overdrive going into that amp. Actually, I saw something recently that got my attention. I need to try one of those all-white Kernom Ridge Augmented Analog Drive pedals. It's all these different clipping circuits in just one box. Man, stuff like that really interests me!

***Screamin' At The Sky* is out now.**

"YOU CAN GET A SH*TLOAD OF TONES FROM ONE GUITAR"
CHRIS ROBERTSON



FREE SPIRIT
"When we started," Chris says, "I just wanted to be Paul Kossoff – a Les Paul with a wah into a Marshall and nothing else."

Debbie Gough of Heriot plays the American Series Virtuoso in Mystic Blue
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The Rolling Stones are back in business. And as their new album *Hackney Diamonds* is released, TG is going deep into the past and present of the greatest rock 'n' roll band in the world...

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The TG readers have voted – and there's a surprise at number one

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How to get Stones' tones – without breaking the bank

Words Neville Marten **Photos** Getty

"You just jump on the riff and it plays you!"

THE ROLLING STONES' 50 GREATEST RIFFS REVEALED – PLUS AN IN-DEPTH GUIDE TO HOW THE VERY BEST OF THEM WERE CREATED

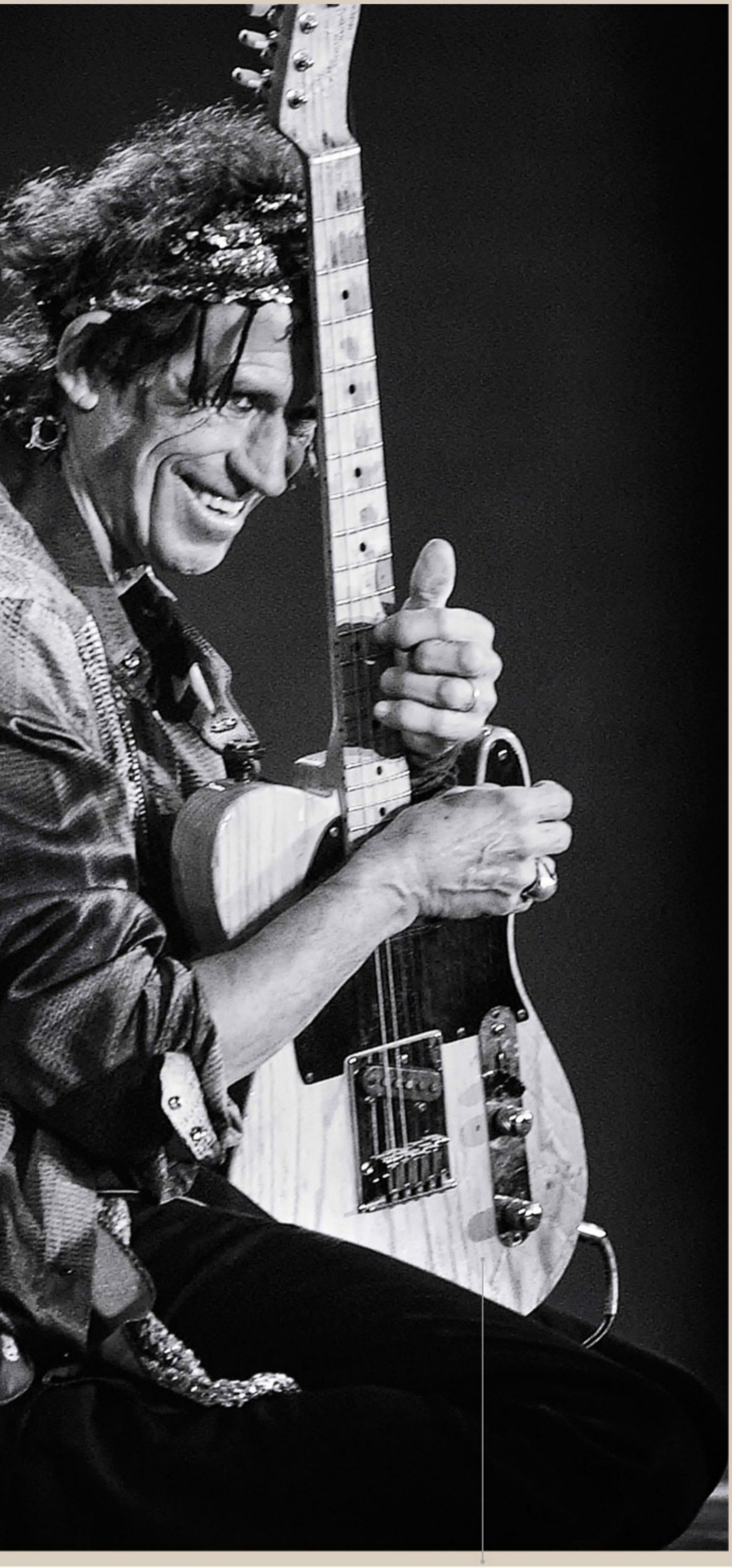
From 1968 on, The Rolling Stones' sound was dominated not only by Mick Jagger's swaggering vocals and the funky rhythm section of Bill Wyman and Charlie Watts, but the guitars that somehow sounded unlike anything else out there at the time. Keith Richards had discovered a new rhythm sound, and with it an unprecedented burst of creativity.

Open tunings are common in the world of fingerstyle acoustic and blues slide, but far less so with regular strummed rhythm guitar. But when country-blues legend Ry Cooder showed Richards open G tuning while working with the band during 1968, it was a lightbulb moment for Keith. With this new tuning he would go on to write some of the most memorable riffs of all time.

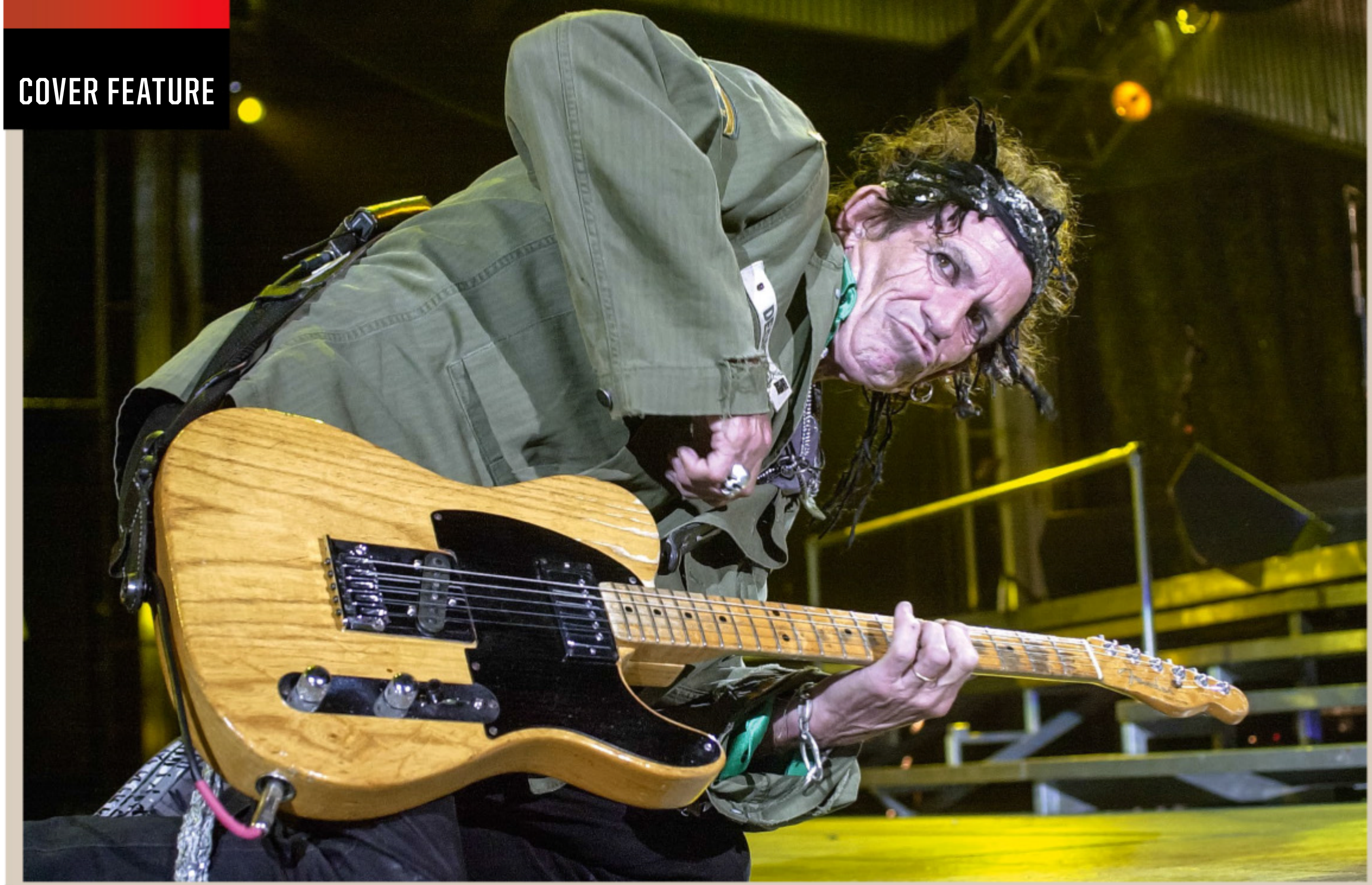
Tuning the sixth, fifth and first strings down by a tone gives the notes DGDGBD. Keith quickly surmised that having a 5th interval on the bottom string (the bass string) would be a hindrance, so in a moment of genius he simply removed it. This gave a five-string G chord with the root on the bottom, so placing a full barre anywhere on the neck created a new major chord; at the 5th fret we get C, on the 7th fret D, and so on.

When Keith added his second and third fingers to the barre to create what looks like an Am7 shape, the G chord became Cadd9/G, the C became Fadd9/C, the D became Gadd9/D, etc. This simple scheme with its unique sound launched many of the Stones' greatest riffs.

Here, we list the top 50 – as voted by TG readers – and reveal the stories of how each the top 10 were written and recorded.



50 Too Much Blood
49 Goin' Home
48 Dance Pt.1
47 Heaven
46 Soul Survivor
45 Live With Me
44 Fingerprint File
43 Dancing With Mr. D
42 Casino Boogie
41 Love Is Strong
40 Jiving Sister Fanny
39 Some Girls
38 One Hit (To The Body)
37 Slave
36 Star Star
35 Undercover Of The Night
34 Mother's Little Helper
33 Harlem Shuffle
32 Before They Make Me Run
31 Hot Stuff
30 Little Red Rooster
29 Sway
28 Stray Cat Blues
27 Let's Spend The Night Together
26 19th Nervous Breakdown
25 Shattered
24 Miss You
23 Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo (Heartbreaker)
22 Get Off Of My Cloud
21 Rocks Off
20 All Down The Line
19 Happy
18 It's All Over Now
17 The Last Time
16 Bitch
15 It's Only Rock 'N' Roll (But I Like It)
14 Monkey Man
13 Paint It Black
12 Beast Of Burden
11 Street Fighting Man



10
Tumbling Dice

(1972)

Recorded at Keith Richards' rented chateau in the South of France, the lead single from *Exile On Main Street* kicks off with a killer riff in B, played in Keith's newfound open G tuning with a capo at the 4th fret. "I was starting to really fix my trademark, starting to find all these other moves," remembers Richards. "How to make minor chords and suspended chords. The five-string becomes very interesting when you add a capo. It gives a certain ring that can't be obtained any other way." As Bill Wyman was absent for the session, lead guitarist Mick Taylor played bass.

09
(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction

(1965)

The riff that broke the Stones globally was 'dreamt' by Keith who captured it on his cassette recorder before going back to sleep. In the studio he used a Gibson maestro fuzz to emulate horns, as initially he wanted to replace the guitar figure later.

"I was screaming for more distortion," he recalled. "We turned the sh*t up and it still wasn't right." Pianist Ian Stewart nipped out to a local music store and returned with the pedal. "I never got into the thing after that," states Richards, "but it was just the right time for that song."

Guitarist and founding member Brian Jones played the E-D-A chord figure that goes under the riff on acoustic, Richards added clean electric rhythm, while Bill Wyman walked his bass from root to 4th and back, along the E natural minor scale.

08
Midnight Rambler

(1969)

Originally recorded during the *Beggar's Banquet* sessions, *Midnight Rambler* was held over for the following album *Let It Bleed*. It was also the final track to feature Brian Jones, who played congas.

Jagger and Richards reckon it's the archetypal Stones song, written together while on holiday in Italy. Keith said of their four-part epic: "Nobody went in there with the idea of doing a blues opera. That's just the way it turned out. I think that's the strength of The Stones; give them a song half raw and they'll cook it."

Held together by Keith's 5th-fret capo boogie rhythm and slide guitars, Jagger adds fills on harmonica while Wyman and Watts groove as only they can.

07
Sympathy For The Devil

(1968)

The opening track on *Beggars Banquet* began life on acoustic guitar with Jagger strumming the chords. "The first time I heard it was when Mick was playing it, and it was fantastic," Charlie Watts enthused.

Along the way the song transformed into the hypnotic epic we recognise today. As Richards remarked, "It started as sort of a folk song and ended up as a kind of mad samba, with me playing bass and overdubbing the guitar later." Although there is strummed rhythm on the final cut from Brian Jones it's barely audible. Instead the song is propelled by session pianist Nicky Hopkins, with percussion added by members of the band plus Ghanaian musician Rocky Dijon.

The main guitar feature is Keith's two spiky-toned solos, played on a three-pickup Les Paul Custom through a Vox AC30. The first enters two and a half minutes in, with spitting E minor pentatonic licks played mostly in shapes one and two. His second outing begins at 4:42, where he elaborates on the gritty, blues-flavoured theme until the track fades.

While Richards' lead work certainly divides opinion, what cannot be denied is that this instantly recognisable guitar playing powers one of the most important rock songs of all time.

06

Start Me Up

(1981)

On any Top 10 Greatest Intros list, *Start Me Up* should be right up there. But the track, which begins with one of Keith's greatest ever riffs, had a difficult birth. From when the band first tried it for 1978's *Some Girls* sessions (and some have said even earlier), Richards always envisaged it as a reggae number. But after 40 or so takes they shelved the song as a lost cause.

Come 1981's impending tour, and management demanded a new album. With Mick and Keith not on the best of terms, producer Chris Kimsey trawled the archives knowing he had a clutch of half-finished gems in the can. Among the failed reggae attempts, Kimsey found a rockier version of *Start Me Up* that became the basis for the 'new' track. As Richards later mused, "With a band that goes on for a long time, you end up with a backlog of really good stuff that you didn't get the chance to finish, or put out."

Assembling in New York for overdubs, Keith adopted his trademark Tele and open G tuning to nail the three-chord boogie intro. Ronnie doubled it using a harder electric tone and added sparse fills. Jagger's vocal is classic Stones sleaze, while engineer Barry Sage and Santana percussionist Michael Carabello augment Watts and Wyman's groove with handclaps and cowbell.

05

Honky Tonk Women

(1969)

Another brilliant Keith intro, here he simply picks the open fourth and third strings with thumb and forefinger to create the unforgettable, "Der, dert-dert, der' lick. With it, Richards stamped *Honky Tonk* on the world in mere seconds – with a little help from producer Jimmy Miller's cowbell, Charlie's kick and snare, and it would seem also from Ry Cooder.

Hired by the band for various projects Cooder has claimed the track is built around licks 'lifted' from these sessions. "A lot of what I did showed up on *Let It Bleed*, but they only gave me credit for playing mandolin on one cut," bemoans Cooder. "*Honky Tonk Women* is taken from one of my licks." In his autobiography, *Life*, Richards admits that Cooder showed him the open G tuning that became his mainstay. Over the years, of course, it has become his own.

Mick Taylor played lead on the track. "I didn't play the riffs that start it," he states, "that's Keith. I played the country-influenced rock licks between the verses."

We'll leave the last word to Richards: "*Honky Tonk* can be a b*stard to play, man. When it's right, it's really right. There's something about the starkness of the beginning you really have to have down, and the tempo has to be just right. It's a challenge, but I love it."

"THE FIVE-STRING BECOMES VERY INTERESTING WHEN YOU ADD A CAPO"

04

Brown Sugar

(1971)

It's that open G thing again! And on *Brown Sugar*, which opens 1971's *Sticky Fingers* album, it forms the basis of the song's entire rhythm track. From the opening 'dit-dit, dat-dat-da-daa-da' lick, Keith runs around the extended turnaround chords of E♭, C, A♭, B♭, C, with added and pulled-off sus4 and 6th (his classic move).

The verses are built around a modified boogie blues, but with the inimitable sound of Richards' pile-driving guitars stamping them with pure Stones magic. And when Mick Taylor added fills in the G breakdown section, and Bobby Keys played his belting sax solo, a rock classic was born.

The joyous music, however, is a backdrop to lyrics that were dark and controversial even back in 1971. But 50 years on it was deemed unsuitable to air live, so in 2021 Jagger withdrew it from the band's setlist, admitting that he would not write such words today.

03

Jumpin' Jack Flash

(1968)

This single from 1968 marked a welcome return from the band's psychedelic 'lost weekend' of *Their Satanic Majesties Request* to their bluesier, rockier roots. It was also their first time with producer Jimmy Miller, and ushered in a more relaxed and enjoyable way of working – the band had self-produced Satanic Majesties and it had been a long and arduous process.

"I hated it," remarked Bill Wyman. "Every day at the studio it was a lottery as to who would turn up and what, if any, positive contribution they would make." Richards, too, found Jimmy's regime much more enjoyable. "Suddenly, between us, this whole new idea started to blossom, this second wind. And it just became more and more fun."

Jumpin' Jack Flash is driven mainly by Keith's Gibson Hummingbird acoustic tuned to open D with capo added. This was fed into a cassette recorder and back out to a mic'd-up extension speaker. "The band all thought I was mad," laughed Richards, "and they sort of indulged me. But I heard a sound and Jimmy was onto it immediately."

Richards added a second acoustic in Nashville tuning (essentially the high octave half of a 12-string set, which gives an almost mandolin-like effect, especially when capo'd). Jones played another rhythm on electric guitar, along with the sparse licks in the choruses.

Jumpin' Jack Flash is The Stones' most performed song, and one of Keith's best-loved. "As soon as I pick up the guitar and play that riff, it's one of the best feelings in the world," he grins. "You just jump on the riff and it plays you!"

02

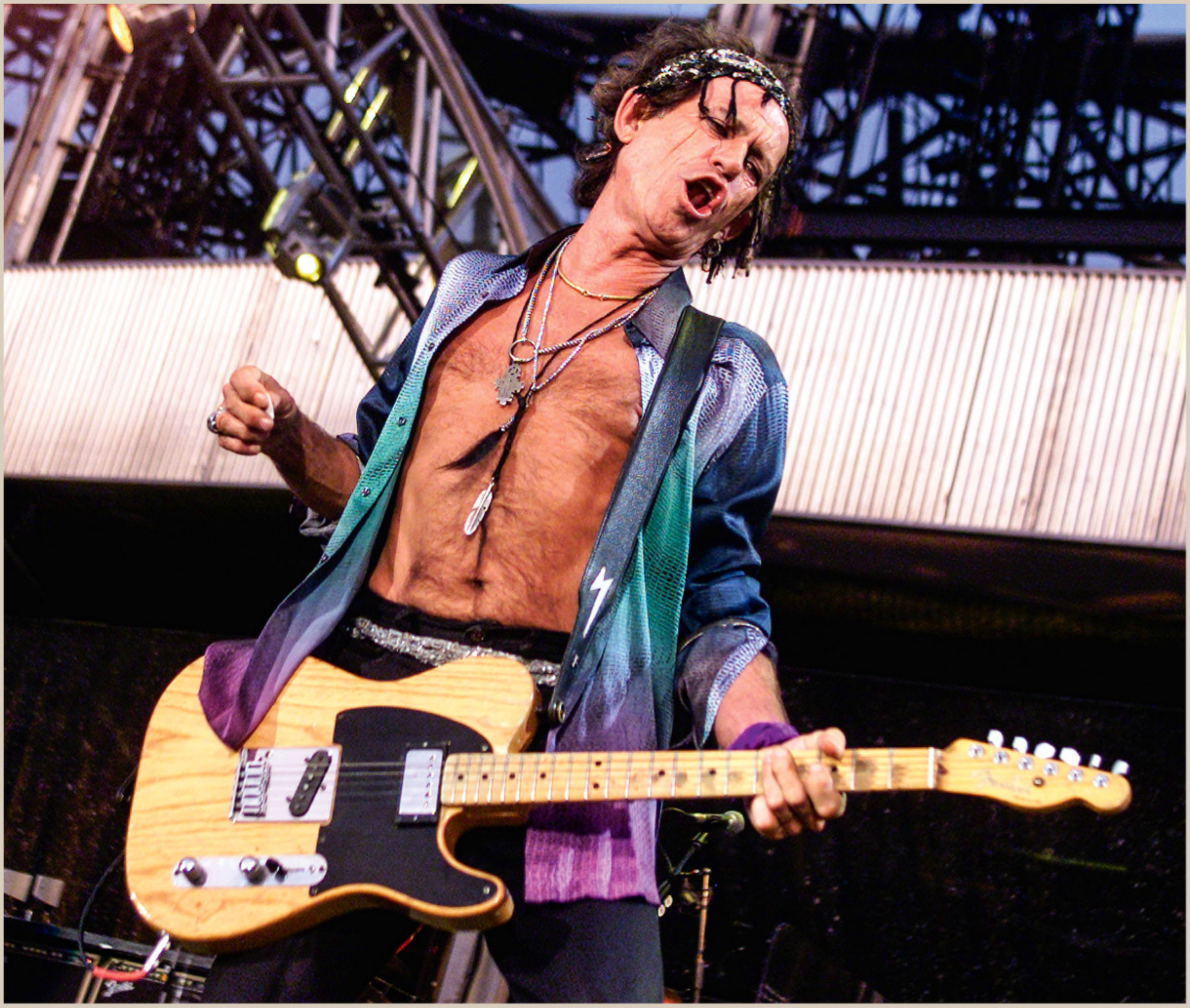
Gimme Shelter

(1969)

The track that kicked off *Let It Bleed* came from a dark place in Richards' life, but also represented a time of political unrest, race riots, and the Vietnam war. Keith's problems were that his girlfriend Anita Pallenberg, whom he'd earlier stolen from Brian Jones, was doing risqué scenes with Jagger for the film *Performance*, and Richards was convinced they'd take things further. He was also consumed by drug use, and came up with *Gimme Shelter* while watching people outside a friend's London apartment rushing to escape from a sudden storm.

Jones doesn't appear on the track, and Taylor was not yet fully in the band, so Richards played all the guitars. Again it was open G tuning, picking out notes from the descending and ascending C#, B, and A chords, then embellishing them with overdubbed fills. "That beginning is so eerie, "says Richards. "Sometimes in a stadium you start to hear echoes." The strumming becomes more insistent as the song progresses, with Keith adding further lead interjections.

Keith also played acoustic on *Shelter*, but "it died on the very last note," Richards quipped. "The whole neck fell off. You can hear it on the original take."



01

Can't You Hear Me Knocking

(1971)

Our poll's winner is a seven-plus-minute epic of two halves. The first is the 'song' part which, unusually for a band that used to jam their tracks into shape, was more or less worked out before they entered the studio. The second section was a Latin-inspired jam that happened purely by accident. More of which later...

The meat and potatoes of *Can't You Hear Me Knocking* is Richards' tight and grungy rhythm track, once again employing the open G, five-string regime and probably played on his black Les Paul Custom. This is countered by a second, equally strident rhythm part performed by Taylor on a walnut brown Gibson ES-345 through a 100-watt Ampeg VT-22 combo.

Richards' part is relatively complex when compared to simpler numbers such as *Honky Tonk Women*. Using mainly doublestops in 4ths and 3rds, he weaves around the changes while Taylor supports him with a more straight-ahead feel. The two-guitar arrangement works brilliantly to create one of the band's tightest and most focused pieces of work.

Unusually for a Stones song, *Can't You Hear Me Knocking* features a stack of vocal harmonies. According to Jagger the key was too high and he struggled in places, so layered up his vocals to disguise the crack in his voice on some of the high notes.

The slowly building jam that takes up the majority of the tune is perhaps Mick Taylor's crowning glory as a Stone. We'll let him pick up the story: "Towards the end of the song I just felt like carrying on playing" he explains. "Everybody was putting their instruments down, but it sounded good so everybody quickly picked them up again and carried on playing. It just happened, and it was a one-take thing."

As luck would have it, the tape was still rolling so Taylor's beautifully toned licks, languid string bends and smooth vibrato (the antithesis of Richards' spiky leads), were captured in full. "We didn't even know they were still taping," Keith confirms. "We were just rambling and I figured we'd just fade it off. It was only when we heard the playback that we realised we had two bits of music. There's the song and there's the jam."

Listening to the finished article, on which Bobby Keys added a gritty tenor sax solo, Billy Preston provided organ stabs, and Rocky Dijon and producer Jimmy Miller chimed in with congas and other percussion, it's clear that Richards was giving Mick Taylor his moment. Having no idea that they were being recorded, the confidence and class of the core members is evident throughout, while Miller's idea to augment the jam with other musicians was a masterstroke.

Many cite Mick Taylor's tenure with The Rolling Stones as the band's most musical period, and listening to this it's hard to deny. Taylor, however, is more modest about his contribution. "I tried to bring my own distinctive sound and style to *Sticky Fingers*, and I like to think I added some extra spice," he speculated. "I don't want to say 'sophistication' – I think that sounds pretentious. Charlie said I brought 'finesse.' That's a better word, so I'll go with what Charlie said."

Words Jenna Scaramanga

"THERE ARE GUITARS EVERYWHERE. EVEN JAGGER GETS IN ON THE STRUMMING!"

Track by track, lick by lick: inside The Rolling Stones' new album **Hackney Diamonds**

ROLLING STONES
HACKNEY DIAMONDS

Led by the octogenarian Mick Jagger, The Rolling Stones bring new meaning to the term '80s rock' with *Hackney Diamonds*. 60 years since their first single, and 40 since the New York Times allegedly began preparing Keith Richards' obituary, the Stones have nothing left to prove but plenty still to say.

Hackney Diamonds features the last recordings of original drummer Charlie Watts, who died in 2021 having laid down two tracks for the album. One of those, *Live By The Sword*, also features original bassist Bill Wyman, the first studio recordings of the Stones' original rhythm section since 1989's *Steel Wheels*.

Although many assume this will be the Stones' last studio effort, Mick Jagger insists it won't be: "We have a whole album of songs we haven't released!" he told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Hackney Diamonds sees the Stones collaborating with 32-year-old producer Andrew Watt, who has helmed recent releases by Iggy Pop, Ozzy Osbourne and Eddie Vedder. Watt is a credited writer on the first three tracks, marking just the seventh time in 60 years that Jagger and Richards have collaborated with an outside writer. Whether it's down to Watt's contribution or the band's determination to go out on a high, the album shows the Stones in rejuvenated, fighting form.

DIAMOND GEEZERS From left: Ronnie Wood, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards

Angry

With those unmistakable Keef chords and a video that draws on Stones footage from the band's '60s and '70s peak, this song recaptures the glory days. The guitars are gritty and covered in fuzz. Richards, of course, wrote *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*, the first ever fuzz-driven hit single, and the rhythm tones on *Hackney Diamonds* often rely more on fuzz than just broken-up amp tones. The solo section sees the dynamics dropping down, as Keef weaves blues licks around the backing vocals while still keeping the riff going. Ronnie trades licks with Keef as the track builds back to its climax.

Get Close

Driven by Steve Jordan's propulsive drum groove, the riffs here are full of beautiful chords with major 6ths and 7ths. With those evocative harmonies, the song is highly melodic but the groove keeps it from ever sounding too mellow. The interplay between Keef and Ronnie's guitars has that classic loose quality where they play their own takes on the same part, an approach that was so influential on early Guns N' Roses. Their parts are panned left and right, so it's worth listening on headphones to hear the guitars bouncing off each other. The guitar tones are dynamic, and you can hear the cleaner tones when they pick more softly, contrasting with the crunch when they dig in.

Depending On You

The album's first ballad sees the Stones joined by a 12-piece string section and a Hammond organ. The first verse is entirely guitar-driven, though, with layered parts creating a lush 12-string effect. This is one of nine songs where Jagger is credited on guitar, and the three parts here work beautifully. Tasteful slide guitar fills pepper the second verse, creating a call-and-response with Jagger's vocal. Even with the arrival of the orchestral kitchen sink towards the end, it's the guitars that are providing a lot of the lush depth that makes the song so effective.

Bite My Head Off

Featuring not one but two knights of the realm, Sir Mick & co. are joined by Sir Paul McCartney on this barnstormer. It might be because Jack White studied early Stones records so earnestly, but this fuzzed-out garage rocker really does sound like The White Stripes. At their rawest, the Stones were a formative influence on punk, and there's plenty of that energy here. A bass breakdown sees McCartney rocking one the hugest fuzz tones he's ever employed before Keef pulls out all his doublestop licks at once in the guitar solo.

Photos Getty/Alamy

The liner notes reveal this was recorded at three different studios, but it sounds impressively like one a band in a room having the time of their lives.

Whole Wide World

This is another fast-paced rocker, this time with a moody minor key verse that has some of the grit of *Gimme Shelter*. The chorus shifts to the relative major key though, creating a bittersweet atmosphere. The guitar tones here are more crunch than fuzz, and the staccato attack on the guitar riff suggests it was plucked with fingers. There's a Leslie effect on the guitar solo which Keef makes the most of with sustained, singing bends that really let the vibrato swirl. It's such a great sound that they bring it back after the last chorus for a belting outro solo.

Dreamy Skies

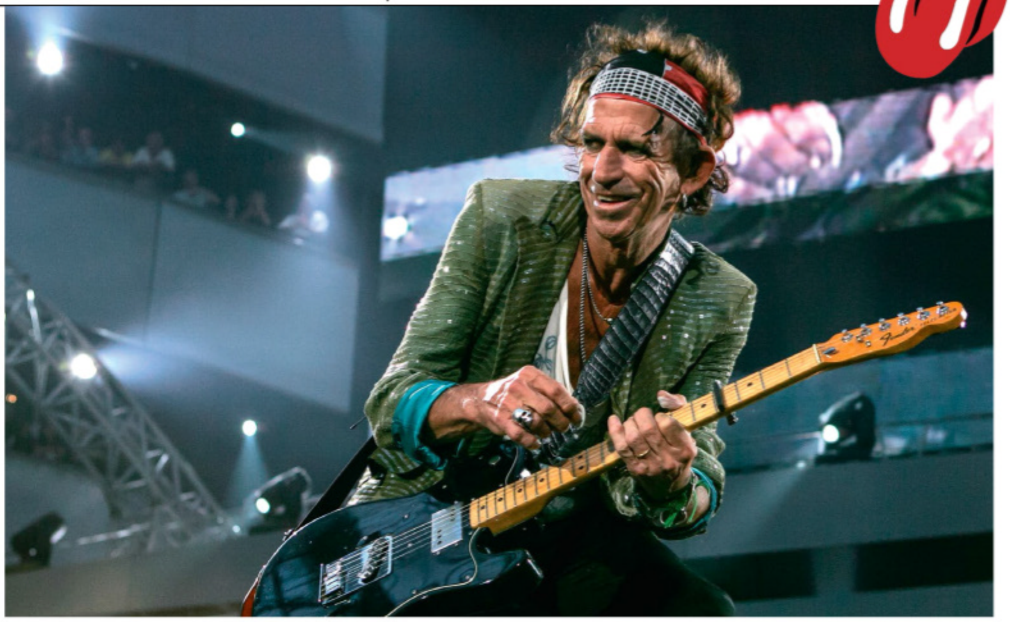
This is the Stones at their most country-influenced: acoustic-driven, with an exaggerated shuffle feel that sounds like a cowboy staggering out of a saloon at midday. There are guitars everywhere – even Jagger gets in on the strumming – from resonator slide hooks and lap steel lines to subtle fingerpicked Telecaster licks. It's a laidback affair that invokes spurs and cacti more than the '60s London referenced in the album title. There's a real art to sounding this loose and also sounding good, of which the Stones have always been masters: the antithesis of programmed, auto-tuned synthetic pop.

Mess It Up

There's a disco feel to this one that makes it immediately uptempo and danceable. The Stones previously veered into disco on 1978's *Some Girls*, but they arguably do it more successfully here. The bridge section sees Keef and Ronnie pulling out their best Nile Rodgers riffs, which works better than you might expect—Rodgers' chord voicings have often overlapped with Keef's favourites anyway. And thanks to the efforts of 2000s indie-rockers like Franz Ferdinand and The Killers at fusing Stones riffs with disco beats, it all sounds weirdly 21st century. This is the first track featuring late drummer Charlie Watts, and there's no denying the groove.

Live By The Sword

This is it then: the last song recorded by four original Rolling Stones. Maybe it's a burst of energy knowing the end is in sight, but the band don't sound close to the grave here. If a bunch of Telecaster-wielding 20-somethings put this out, critics would be raving about the return of rock 'n' roll. Which it is. It sounds noticeably more like 1960s Stones than the preceding tracks, even if it's not easy to say why. The guitar solo is a snarling mix of open string licks and crunchy doublestops. The piano is from none other than Elton John, and the chemistry between these musicians is palpable.



Driving Me Too Hard

This is a relaxed mid-tempo number where again, layered chords from Jagger, Richards and Wood create an absolutely enormous sound. Ronnie's melodic major pentatonic fills dance between lines in the verses almost like a pedal steel, and the guitar lines are almost as melodic as the vocals. The solo shows off the kind of oblique bending licks that enhanced *Honky Tonk Women* in a whole new context. Where *Dreamy Skies* showed the Stones could go country, *Driving Me Too Hard* shows that country can go Rolling Stones.

Tell Me Straight

Opening with a super-clean, chorused arpeggio riff that could almost come from Metallica, Keith delivers a Dylan-esque vocal on this bluesy ballad. A subtle layer of acoustic guitar from Jagger propels the track, allowing Richards and Wood to leave space with haunting, sustained chords. Those chords are full of tension and suspended notes, and with the chorused tone create an atmosphere that is a powerful contrast to every other track here. While the chorused guitar tones evoke the '80s, piano and Rhodes tracks keep this in touch with Stones' roots.

ROLLING STONES
HACKNEY DIAMONDS

Sweet Sounds Of Heaven

This gospel ballad has keys from Stevie Wonder and duet vocals from Lady Gaga, so guitars understandably take a back seat. Still, Ronnie and Keef show they know their way around a soul tune, with Steve Cropper-style hammer-ons and runs enhancing the verses and sustained powerchords giving weight to the chorus. Gaga's vocal is monumental, and the band can't seem to end the tune. They hit what feels like the climactic chord after five minutes, but immediately reprise the tune, building over two minutes to another fierce crescendo. Richards and Wood are masters of space here, subtly adding texture where it's needed.

Rolling Stone Blues

Incredibly, it's taken until now for the Stones to cover this Muddy Waters standard. They arguably lit the fuse for the British blues boom, and they've never been shy about acknowledging their influences. They deliver this faithfully to Waters' seminal guitar-and-vocal recording, with just Mick and Keef together in a room. Taking it at a slightly faster lick than Waters, and with some tasteful harmonica from Mick, this is the product of lifetime love of the blues. Andrew Watt's production deserves particular credit here, because the guitar sounds as though it could be from an early 20th century tape recording.

***Hackney Diamonds* is out now.**

Honky Tonk Riffin'

Try out some licks employed by The Human Riff himself, courtesy of his trademark open G tuning

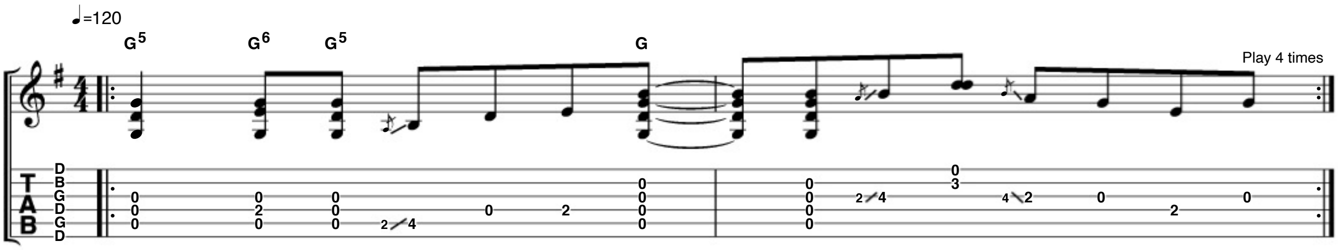
Keith Richards has employed open G tuning on some of the Stones' best-loved tunes. Big hits *Honky Tonk Women*, *Start Me Up* and *Brown Sugar* should be enough to pique your interest, but it's a tuning he's used quite extensively.

Open G is relatively simple. Starting in standard tuning (EADGBE) you'll need to detune the two bass strings and the high E by two semitones apiece (giving you DGDGBD). Keith's quirky variation on this is to ditch the bass string (the low D) all together, leaving him just five strings to play.

Like many open tunings, open G sounds great with just the open strings strummed – and, of course, you can transpose it with a first-finger barre across any fret. So, with basic chord/pitch changes made easy, this leaves you with three fingers free for all those widdly licks. Right, let's get rolling…

01 OPEN G LICKS

bit.ly/tg377audio



The open G tuning allows for a perfect G chord to be strummed on the top five strings without any fretting-hand involvement. This makes adding licks and fills around the basic chord a lot easier and the results sound great. Just check out *Honky Tonk Women*.

02 EXTENDED CHORDS

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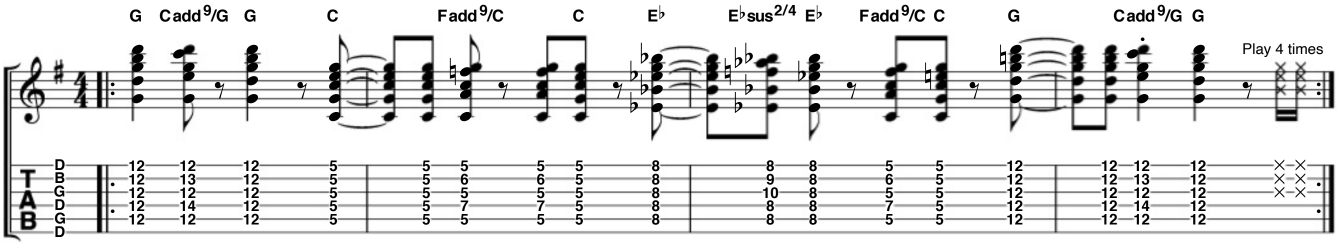
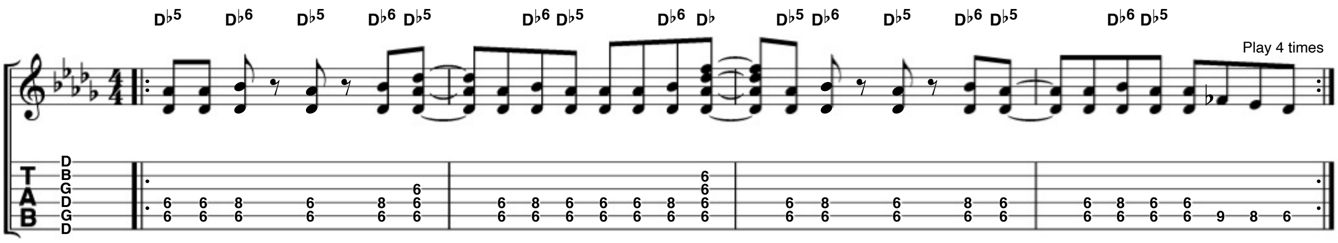


Our second riff is inspired by Stones classics like *Start Me Up* and *Brown Sugar*, particularly in the first two chords (G and Cadd9/G). Watch out for the variation in bar 2 on the E♭sus2/4 (short for sus2sus4). It's almost the same shape as the prior add9/G, but it is quite distinct – and a typical trick of Keith's.

03 BOOGIE RIFF

bit.ly/tg377audio



To finish off, we've got a classic boogie riff to learn, again exploiting open G tuning. Keith is a fan of using a capo for this type of riff, so feel free to experiment with one on the 6th fret. Some of the licks from Example 1 can be transposed to work up here in D♭, too.

Guitars and backing Jon Bishop Photo Getty

I am music

I live through your moments
Your first shake of the rattle
Your recorder lesson
Your match day anthem
Your queueing anticipation
Your hands in the air
Your main stage mayhem
Your favourite movie scene
Your first dance
Your last night of the proms
Your family singalong
Your swan song.

Musicians'
Union

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Words Jonathan Horsley

Start Me Up!

HOW TO SOUND LIKE THE ROLLING STONES – WITHOUT LOSING YOUR SHIRT ON THE OVERHEATED VINTAGE MARKET

The Rolling Stones' sound is governed by its own arcane magic. Many have tried to imitate it but no one has really got close. There are few more elusive sounds in guitar than that of Keith Richards and Ronnie Wood, not to mention Mick Taylor. It can be wraithlike, spidery chords and phrases like smoke in the wind. It can be in your face, like *Jumpin' Jack Flash* or *Start Me Up*. As with their rock 'n' roll influences, their guitar and amp choices are old-school, their rigs minimalistic. Keef might have popularised the fuzz pedal with the Maestro-driven riff to *Satisfaction*, but he has engaged little further pedalboard culture.

What's more important is guitar and amp choice, with a few carefully chosen added extras, and here we will look at some options at a beginner to intermediate player's budget, and for the serious amateur and jobbing pro. You can't really buy a Micawber clone, Richards' iconic modded Telecaster. Who among us can afford a '59 ES-335? Who would dare fire bullets into our Gibson SJ-200, as Richards famously did? But we can find alternatives on the market. The rest? Well that's all about your touch, feel and vintage rock 'n' roll and blues vocabulary.

You Got The Silver

GUITARS FOR AROUND A GRAND

FENDER VINTERA TELECASTER '70S CUSTOM

Fender's Vintera series knocks it out the park when it comes to affordable takes on its classic designs. If we're looking at the Keef side of things, the Telecaster '70s Custom should be able to handle most of the catalogue with its Wide Range humbucker at the neck position and '70s-voiced Tele single-coil at the bridge. The 'Thin C' period-correct neck profile and 7.25" fingerboard radius should make it feel authentically '70s, allowing you to wrap your grip right around the neck and throttle out the chords.

FENDER VINTERA II '50S STRATOCASTER IN 2-COLOR SUNBURST

Ronnie Wood has played guitars from Zemaitis and Duesenberg as well as a Firebird, a Les Paul Junior, and his custom ESP. But his old faithful is a sunburst mid-'50s hardtail Strat. Now, it's hard to find a non-Custom Shop model with a hardtail. Robert Cray's signature Strat is a superb option, but it has a '60s C profile neck. We want a soft-V. The 1957 Strat from the American Vintage II series is another solid contender but for a grand, this new Vintera II model has the neck, tones and the vibe.

The best things in life are free

THREE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SOUND LIKE THE STONES – WITHOUT PAYING A PENNY

1 Learn open tunings
Keef's favourite is Open G (low to high: D-G-D-G-B-D)

2 Use five strings
Richards doesn't need the sixth. It gets in the way!

3 Play with a great drummer
Or, at the very least, a great rhythm track!

Beggars banquet

GUITARS FOR THE SMALLER BUDGET

SQUIER FSR CLASSIC VIBE '50S TELECASTER

If ever there was a candidate for an affordable take on Micawber, it's this. Okay, you might want to perform some serious mods. Richards swapped the stock bridge out for a brass bridge with individual saddles, upgrading the tuners to Sperzels. You could do similar here. But as it is, this Tele is a great vintage-inspired guitar at an approachable price point.

SQUIER CLASSIC VIBE '50S STRAT

As budget Strats go, this one is hard to beat, and crucially it gets the look bang on whilst offering a similarly versatile platform for rock 'n' roll. It has a pine body, and while the C profile neck might not be vintage-accurate, it may possibly be more to modern player's tastes.

EPIPHONE HUMMINGBIRD STUDIO

If we need to do acoustic Stones and only have one pick then it has to be a Hummingbird, and this is a great-value alternative to the Gibson square-shouldered dreadnought that inspired it. It has a solid spruce top, layered mahogany back and sides, and an onboard Fishman Presys VT pickup and preamp system. And that Faded Cherry finish with the historic pickguard looks so cool...

Power Up

THE AMPLIFIERS

£1,449

£679

FENDER '65 PRINCETON REVERB

There have been dozens of different amplifiers on the Rolling Stones backline – Mesa/Boogie, Ampeg etc – but fundamentally we want a US-voiced tube amp with a nice spring reverb, adequately powered for the stage but small enough to drive in the studio, and the Princeton takes some beating. It's not cheap. There are alternatives, such as the Tweed covered Fender Champ, but for its versatility, its musical drive and some of the sweetest cleans you'll hear, we'd pony up for a Princeton and borrow a Champ if we're recording.

FENDER BLUES JUNIOR IV

If the Princeton would blow the budget, the Blues Junior IV remains the number one choice for anyone seeking affordable Fender tube tones. There's a lacquered tweed model if that sort of thing's important to you, but with onboard spring reverb and a Fat switch, this is a great rock 'n' roll amp.

Wild cards and extras

THE PEDALS AND THE MODS

MAESTRO FUZZ-TONE FZ-M

With just one riff, initially imagined as a horn part that Otis Redding would later make good on, *Satisfaction* officially inaugurated the age of the fuzz box with Richards on the Maestro FZ-1. This FZ-M reissue has a modern voicing, but it's the Classic mode you want here.

£145

£56

ELECTRO-HARMONIX SATISFACTION

Alternatively, if the Maestro blows your budget, Electro-Harmonix's Satisfaction will cover you for that early fuzz sound. It does wasp-in-a-jar fuzz better than anything, and it's almost kazoo-like with single-coils. EHX recently launched the Satisfaction Plus (£99), which added Bias, Tone, and switchable Fat/Normal modes for more versatility.

ABM CUSTOM SHOP TB-1HR BRASS RELIC TELECASTER BRIDGE

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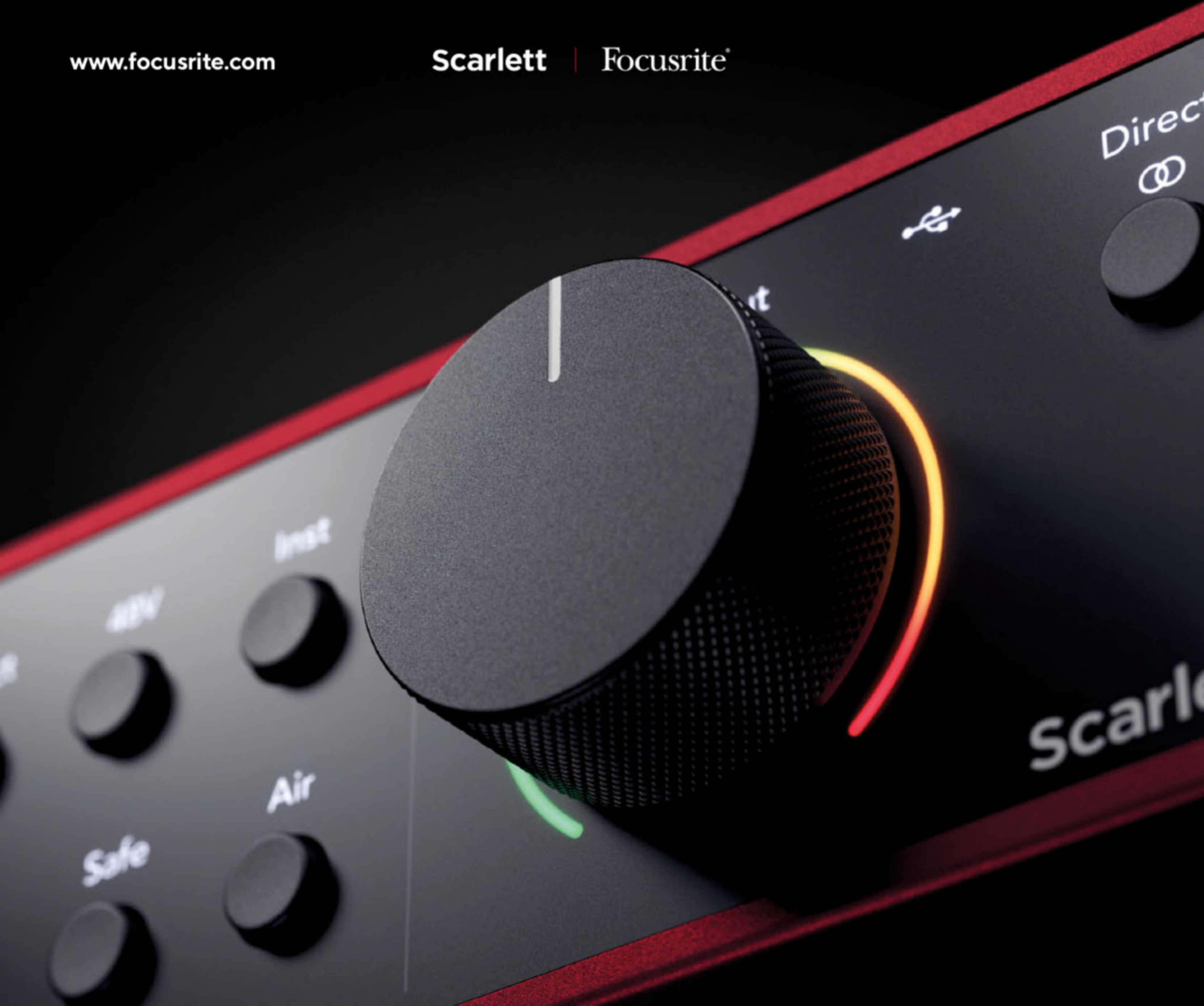


Words Amit Sharma **Photos** Ilya Merman

"Understanding what creates a groove is fundamental to rhythm playing"

Richard Fortus, rhythm guitarist in **Guns N' Roses**, reveals how he acts as a foil for Slash – and how an education in funk makes him a better player

When we think of the great guitar players associated with Guns N' Roses, it's only natural to envisage Slash and Izzy Stradlin first – given how their incendiary dynamic made *Appetite For Destruction* and the *Use Your Illusion I* and *II* albums such an unimpeachable goldmine for six-string enthusiasts around the world. But all these years later, it's Richard Fortus who actually stands as the storied group's longest serving axeman, having joined in 2002 and remained for every tour since, including the Not In This Lifetime reunion that stole headlines thanks to Slash's return to the ranks.

By his own admission, Fortus is there to support his co-guitarist as best he can and ultimately serve the song. Not that he knows which song will be coming next on any given night, mind, due to the way that singer Axl Rose runs the show…

"Set list, you say!" he laughs, talking to TG from Saratoga Springs, New York, during the band's ongoing We're F'N' Back! Tour. "It varies night to night and there's no list. Basically, Axl will just call out the songs. Quite often there are groups of songs that we all know go together, but it's all up in the air. Axl will call it as he feels it!"

Today, Richard talks about his journey in Guns N' Roses, from his involvement on 2008's criminally underrated *Chinese Democracy* to those recent tracks on which he features alongside Slash – *Hard Skool*, *Absurd* and recent release *Perhaps*. As an avid collector of gear, he reveals his favourite tools of the trade. And he explains the key to his working relationship with Slash – understanding the different roles required both musically and tonally in order to create a wider sonic picture…

It's interesting how you and Slash vary from playing the same exact riff in the same positions to other chordal ideas on different areas of the neck…

I try to look at my job in Guns N' Roses as supporting what Slash does. I'll listen to what he's doing and figure out the best way to fit into that. If that means playing a unison riff to push the idea further to the front, then I'll do that. Or I might play around what he's doing. It all comes down to listening and doing my very best to support the song. That always comes first!

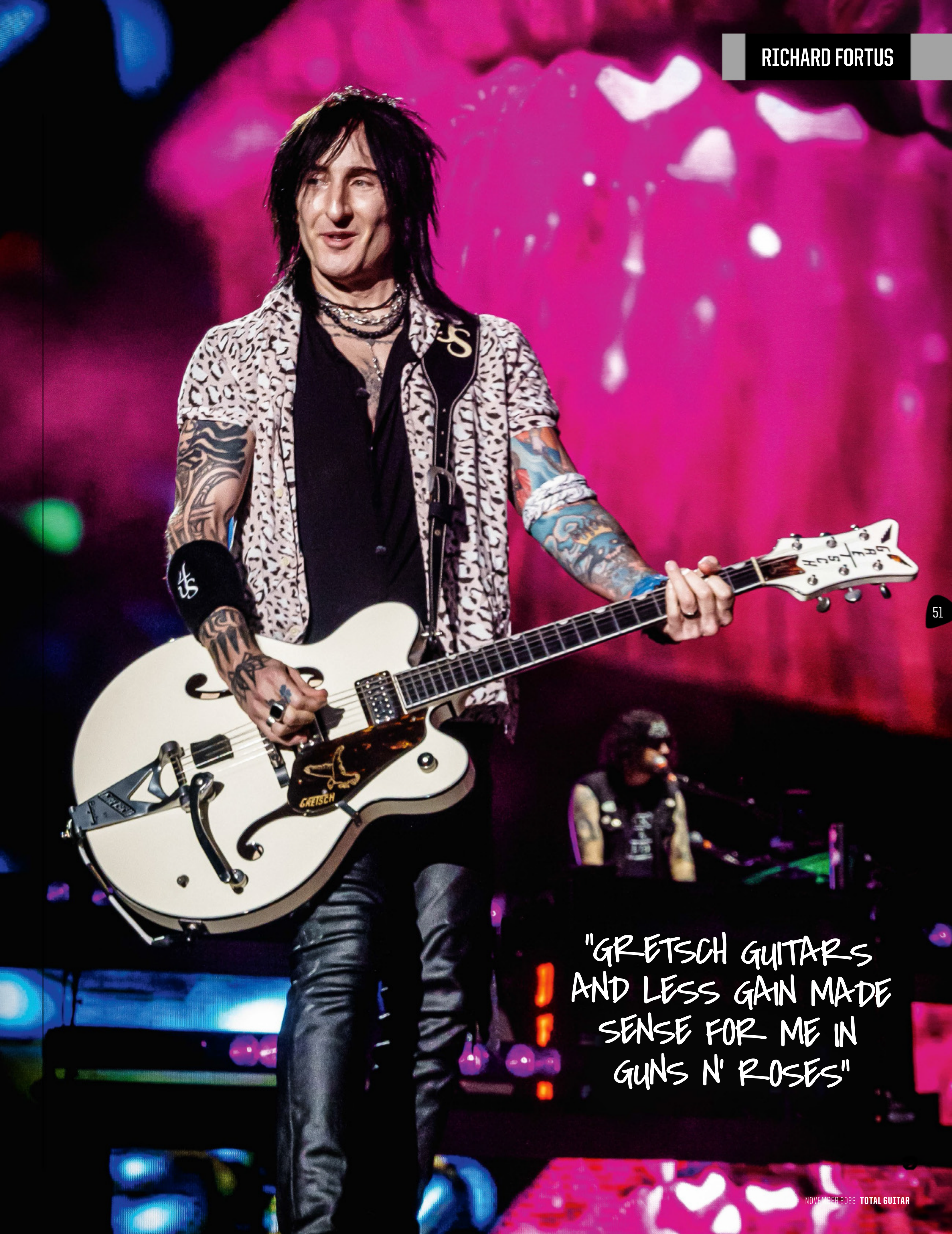
JUNGLE RHYTHM Richard Fortus on stage with Guns N' Roses at Fenway Park, Boston in August.

It's a very similar dynamic to the Izzy Stradlin and Slash years, in that regard. You and Izzy ended up becoming friends when he was occasionally guesting before the reunion tour.

Yeah! At various points, Izzy would come out and do shows with us. Me and him would end up hanging out and going to museums or jamming backstage. We have a very similar musical background, like we came from the same school of playing. But I guess that also goes for Slash and Duff – we all come from listening to the same kind of bands. There are a lot of shared influences and The Rolling Stones are definitely one of the big ones."

What exactly did you like about Izzy's playing on those classic Guns records?

It's that fundamental, arguably more simplistic approach. Juxtaposed against Slash's musical voice, it really created something really special. Even more so with the writing, because Izzy's ideas came from a very basic and rootsy place, while Slash has always been more of an evolved player. The combination of the two fit really well. Izzy comes from the Keith Richards approach to guitar – as opposed to the Jimmy Page one, which is closer to Slash. Izzy would do very simple, single-note lines to outline a chord or progression – very much in a Chuck Berry or Bo Diddley kind of way, and that worked beautifully with Slash's heavier and thicker sound.

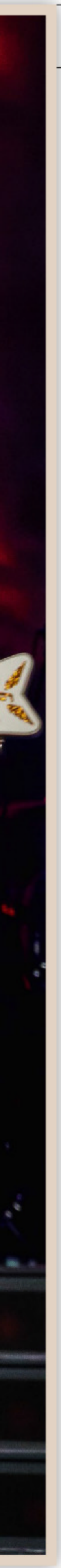


"GRETSCH GUITARS AND LESS GAIN MADE SENSE FOR ME IN GUNS N' ROSES"

Another big difference between stage left and stage right is how much gain is being used. Slash tends to have more firepower while you tend to live on an edge-of-breakup crunch.
I tend to gravitate to that type of tone more. It's also what helps in supporting Slash's sound, because listeners can differentiate. When me and Slash first started working together, I really loved P-90 pickups and PAFs, but finding the right sound to fit around his tone was actually quite a challenge. I ended up going down the same route as Malcolm Young, using Gretsch Filter'Trons. That works so well in conjunction with another player using more gain and a PAF-style humbucker. Filter'Trons have more low-end and top-end, so if you're not using much gain, because gain and output seem to bring out more mids, it helps bring out a player like Slash who is more mid-focused. That's why Gretsch guitars and less gain made sense for me in Guns N' Roses. Using a P-90 didn't really work, because that's another mid-heavy pickup. I found it would just fight too much with Slash's side of the stage. The Filter'Trons are the perfect way to sit around and stay out of his sonic space.

You have an impressively diverse musical background – from your work with The Psychedelic Furs and Thin Lizzy to Rihanna, Enrique Iglesias and NSYNC. What taught you most about the art of rhythm guitar?
What did more for my rhythm chops than anything else was playing in a zydeco band! I was in one for a few years back when I was in New York doing sessions. I'd play with this group who were quite big locally and we'd play all over the city. Rhythmically, what that gig did for my guitar playing was huge! It's a different pocket to sit in, rooted in early funk stuff like The Meters and The Neville Brothers. It made me focus on rhythm in a different way and really improved it.

And, as many players find, learning more about other styles can do wonders for your rock playing...
Listening to a lot of different styles of music is really helpful. Say with funk stuff, there is so much importance on finding the groove. That can do a lot for your rock playing, because you learn how to lock in with the drummer. Even if it's a simple and repetitive pattern,



you have to make it sit right. I used to sit and analyse what was going on with The Meters and why those interlocking parts sounded so magical. I found it fascinating, looking at what pushes and pulls and what makes it feel that way. There can be so many minute details in simple parts, like how the player pushes on the one or somewhere else.

Unlike lead guitar, rhythm playing can often be quite deceiving in that it might sound easier than it actually is.

It's all about the little things. Nowadays with the Internet, you can listen to isolated Malcolm Young tracks from the records and live performances. And it's just impeccable. There was such an art to what he did because of all those little details. Okay, it was generally simple – we're not talking 9th, 11th or 13th chords – it was root and fifth for the most part. But it was all about where he placed those chords in the beat and how he accentuated them. It couldn't be more simple and yet it couldn't be more complex. Rhythm guitar is all about looking at those details because they are so often overlooked. Understanding what creates a groove is fundamental to rhythm playing. That's why Hendrix was magical. What his right hand was doing on *Killing Floor* set up this groove that was so special.

Similar things could be said of Stevie Ray Vaughan on songs like *Pride And Joy*, *Love Struck Baby* and *Crossfire*.

What Stevie's right hand was doing was just ridiculous. He's a great example of someone who was so rhythmically advanced. That shuffle on *Pride And Joy* is something else. Things like that are overlooked by a lot of modern players. People tend to focus on the athletics of shred because it's fun and gives you a sense of accomplishment. One of the best ways to get better at rhythm guitar is to record yourself and listen back to see if you are locking in, or able to manipulate feel by where you place your accents. Why does one bar feel so good and the other feel stiff? You have to ask yourself these questions. With modern technology you can actually look at the grid and see it with your own eyes.

It's easy for guitarists to forget that – unless you're Steve Vai or Yngwie Malmsteen – most musical situations will be predominantly rhythm-based…

It's much more rare to get called in to do lead parts when you're doing TV commercials or playing on somebody else's album. Usually you're there to be focused on rhythm. Locking in is so important… that's what gets you gigs! I would always focus on the two and four – those had to be right on with the drummer and if I did that right, everything else would fall into place.

Another big difference between rhythm and lead players is in the economy of motion. Shredders are taught to minimise movement while open chord aficionados are encouraged to strike hard from afar, which is something we've seen you do a lot.

For me, that comes from listening to Pete Townshend in The Who, or Dave Davies in The Kinks. Those guys attacked their strings. You can actually hear the notes going slightly sharp and then falling back in. That creates an excitement because you can tell they f*ckin' mean it. It was the same with Malcolm, that guy would shred picks. It's like he would pick them up and they'd turn to dust! That was partly down to using thicker strings, too. Stevie Ray was similar in that sense. That's how you get that fat tone. You can't use too much gain when playing like that, it just doesn't seem to work as well. That's why I like to set my amps so they're just on the edge of breakup. I use a single channel amp, so I play soft and use fingers for my clean tone. It all comes from my hands and how I attack the strings. It's more about expression… that's what turns me on about music."

Can you talk us through what you used on *Chinese Democracy* and which songs you're most proud of?

"WHAT STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN'S RIGHT HAND WAS DOING WAS JUST RIDICULOUS"

ROCK SOLID

Richard Fortus names his four greatest rhythm guitarists of all-time…

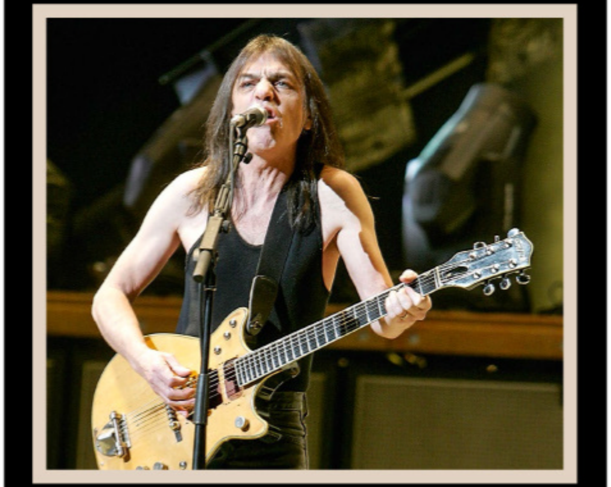


Photo Getty

Malcolm Young

As far as rock 'n' roll goes, Malcolm sits at the top of the heap. It just doesn't get any better than him. His tone was always the perfect rock guitar sound. He knew how to dial himself in to set Angus up perfectly… As a sonic picture, those guys had it going on more than anybody else. Their tones worked so well together.

Jimi Hendrix

I've always felt Hendrix was one of the greatest rhythm players ever. His sense of feel and time was simply phenomenal. He borrowed a lot from Curtis Mayfield, obviously, but made it so unique and groundbreaking. It's funny, people don't really tend to think about this stuff because he would be the only guitar player on stage, but his rhythm skills were just genius.

Eddie Van Halen

What I said about Hendrix also applies to Eddie… it's the same thing. When you think about rhythm, you generally think about a supporting guitar player, right? So in that sense, maybe Eddie doesn't count. I don't really know the definition of what a rhythm player is. It's such a nebulous term, isn't it?! But as well as being genius lead guitarists, Eddie and Jimi were both unbelievably good as rhythm players. Just listen to a Van Halen song like *I'm The One* – his sense of swing and shuffle was just mind-blowing. That guy was impeccable in every single way!

Keith Richards

Keith knew how to create a base and foundation for The Rolling Stones. He would provide that solid core for the rest of the band to play over. For me, it comes down to how he sits in the pocket and always knew how to come up with the right part for the song.

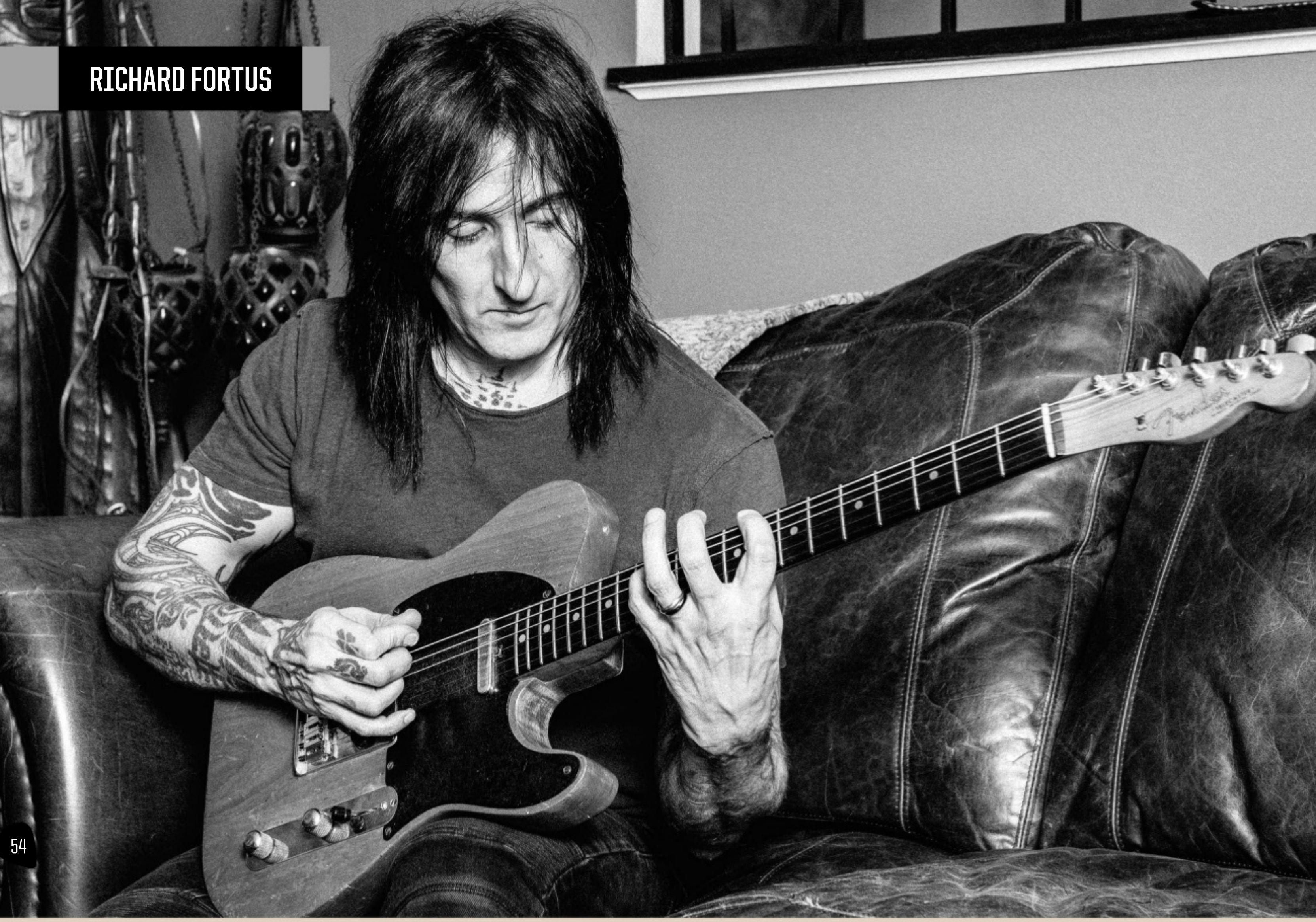


Photo Reed R. Radcliffe

THE ARTIST
"I tend to paint from a broad palette," Richard says.

I really like what I did on *Better*. As far as what I used, there was a Tele and a '59 tweed Twin on a lot of stuff. I also used my 1973 Marshall Super Lead [originally owned by Mötley Crüe's Mick Mars and modded by Jose Arredondo]. There was a Firebird I used quite a bit. There was some Gretsch but not a whole lot. All of the players on that record sounded great. Robin [Finck] was just brilliant throughout, especially his solo on *Better*. He's such a passionate player, I love what he does. Buckethead's parts were absolutely breath-taking and mind-blowing. The precision of his right hand – oh my god, it's crazy!

So what exactly did you end up using on the new Guns N' Roses tracks like *Hard Skool*, *Absurd* and *Perhaps*?
Perhaps is a real mid-tempo song with that Elton John kind of groove. I like that one a lot! I mainly stuck with my signature Gretsch and an older 6120 from 1958. Those got plugged through a Park JTM45 from 1966 in conjunction with a 1959 Fender Bassman. That combination ended up being a favourite of mine. For the heavier stuff, I would use this old Orange that was modded by Obeid Khan, a good friend who does all my amp stuff. He's also my neighbour! He designed all the amps that I'm using live, all the Magnatone stuff – and we also used some Magnatones on the new material. I also have a JTM45/100 that I would use in conjunction with the tweed Twin or a 3x10 Fender Bandmaster. Those seem to be the ones I liked most.

And as for the pedalboard, have there been any recent changes, or is there anything new that's currently blowing your mind?
The main change recently is that I swapped out my Arion SCH-Z chorus for a Way Huge Blue Hippo. Jeorge Tripps made one for me and it does what the Arion did but slightly better and more three-dimensional. I set it with everything up for a Leslie kind of effect. That sound got used a lot on *Chinese Democracy* so I will use it on those songs, as well as the beginning of *Live And Let Die*. I've also been digging the Octonaut Hyperdrive by Interstellar Audio. As far as Klon-style pedals go, that's one of the best, along with the Scream Honey Overdrive by CKK. I love my SoloDallas Schaffer Replica – that's a huge part of the sound. And I'm still obsessed with my Love Pedal Eternity. I've been using that for almost 20 years. I keep trying to find something better but nothing knocks it off the 'board. I recently switched delays, I'm using the bigger Jam Delay Llama Xtreme which has the three presets plus modulation and does all my longer delays. I tend to paint from a broad palette. I like using lots of colours and have a lot to choose from… that's probably why I love pedals so much!

> "LOCKING IN IS SO IMPORTANT… THAT'S WHAT GETS YOU GIGS!"

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Words Amit Sharma **Photo** Adam Gasson

"Everybody has to find their spot"

How the **Foo Fighters**' three guitarists combine for maximum riffing effect – by **Chris Shiflett**

Chris Shiflett joined Foo Fighters as lead guitarist in 1999, and since 2005 he has operated in a three-guitar line-up alongside Dave Grohl and Pat Smear. As he tells TG: "Being in Foo Fighters has made me a much better rhythm guitar player..."

How do you go about divvying up the rhythm guitar parts in Foo Fighters and creating such a wide sonic profile?

It's interesting, because when Pat came back and we had three guitar players, we really had to think about that stuff. Especially with the older songs. We wanted to figure out who would sit where and do our best to not sit in the same places of the neck and all that sort of stuff. And over the years, it's just become something we've fallen into. A lot of it happens when you're making a record because you're not recording everything at the same time, you're figuring out parts that slot in and don't step on the other things that are happening in the song.

How much of that changes when you take those songs to the stage?

When we play live, that can all get turned on its head. We might end up playing things someone else played on the record, because Dave will have to sing. He might have played some complicated thing on the album but he probably won't do that when he's singing. So that's when we start moving things around. The guiding light in Foo Fighters is representing the song in the way people want to hear it. Everybody has to find their spot.

What have you learned from being in a band with two other guitarists?

Prior to that, I'd never really thought about rhythm playing. Obviously I'd done it, because I was in a bunch of bands playing riffs, but I'd never given it much thought. I wasn't really thinking about locking into the rhythm section or learning how to follow the drummer. But it's all really important stuff when you look at how a band glues together. So I ended up learning more about that side of guitar playing later down the line after joining. And sometimes it's hard to hear all the nuances and details when you have three guitar players going at the same time.

On a big stage with a crowd and all the ambient noise, you don't really hear the clickety clack of the pick attack or if we're all locking in. So I might just look at Dave's right hand and that's how I get the right rhythm. If that ain't working, I'll get the rhythm from his vocal – I'll lock into what he's singing or I might even look at him tapping his leg.

Do you dial things in differently? Who tends to live where tonally?

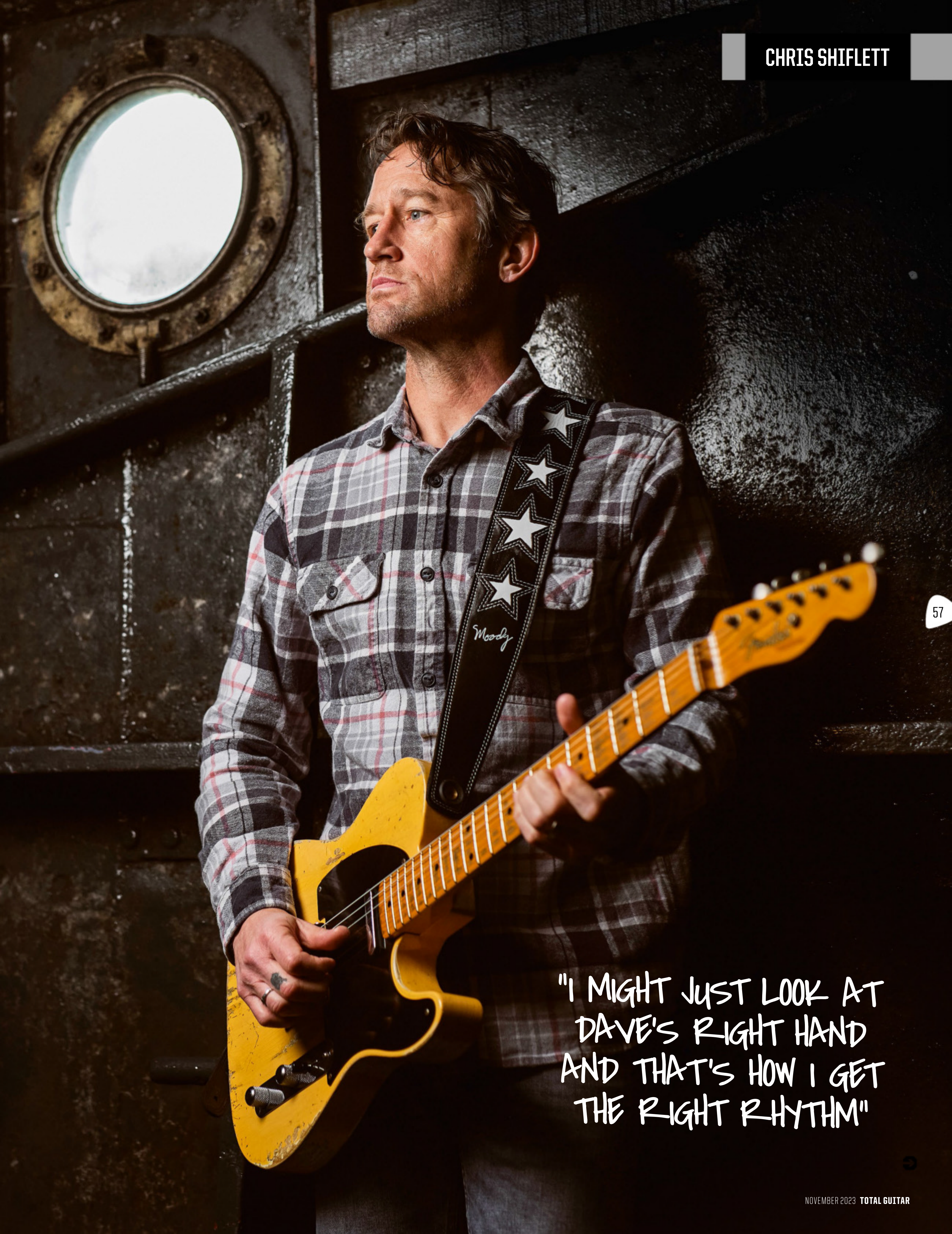
These are definitely things we've thought about and things that have shaped my tone choices over the years. I switch between my Vox and Friedman amps, and the Friedmans are usually gained up and on around six. It's a heavy crunch kind of sound. I would say Pat tends to be the gnarliest guitarist in the band when it comes to tone. He's generally the most overdriven out of the three of us. He'll also use more baritones to dial in nastier and throatier bark. I think Dave's set-up has four choices from clean to really heavy, and he tends to use the third one most. He uses those hollow-bodies a lot, and they have a specific sound to them – which is partly why I ended up using a lot of P-90s.

PEDAL PUSHER
"I definitely have way more effects than the other guys," Chris says.

That will definitely help create separation...

In a band of humbuckers, a P-90 sits in a different place. I guess it's technically a single coil, but it's got a growl that's in between a traditional single coil and a humbucker. And I definitely have way more effects than the others. That's probably what's most noticeable about my corner of the stage – there's a lot of flangers, phasers and delays. I like to colour different things using pedals, just to help them poke out. There are little things I get a kick out of.

Just a week ago, me and Pat were working out the bridge section of the song *Walk*. I'd normally be doing the octave line through the whole thing but I've got to sing a harmony in the middle section and it didn't feel right doing that and the octave line. So what we decided is that I start it, then switch over to chords when I'm singing while Pat takes over, and then when I'm done singing we switch back. I don't know how it sounds to the crowd, but I hope it sounds like a panning effect where the melody comes from different sides of the stage. It's fun orchestrating stuff like that.



"I MIGHT JUST LOOK AT DAVE'S RIGHT HAND AND THAT'S HOW I GET THE RIGHT RHYTHM"

POWER PLAYER Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong is a master of rhythm guitar

21 WAYS TO BETTER RHYTHM

Master different styles of music and improve your timing with TG's massive lesson

We've said this many times within these pages: the majority of most electric guitarists' performance time is spent playing rhythm – and, as such, it's pretty important to practise this aspect of your playing. Now, we don't want to bring up the thorny subject of what constitutes rhythm guitar, and, of course, the line between rhythm and lead is somewhat blurry. Suffice to say, here in our massive six-page tutorial, we're taking the broadest definition of rhythm guitar. Chords, picking, strumming, riffs, single-note accompaniments, various aspects of timing and more all feature here. And with 21 tab examples, complete with recorded audio tracks and guitar-less backing mixes to jam along to, all in different styles of music, there's enough here to keep us all rocking until, well, until next month's issue comes out!

01 DOWNPICKING: PUNK

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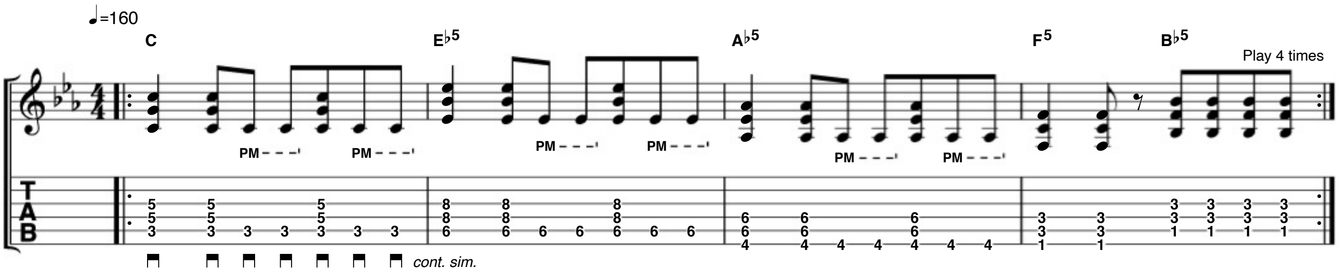

No surprises here! This example mixes up core punk ingredients of powerchords, palm muting and downpicking. At 160bpm, the tempo is fairly rapid, so you'll need a steady picking motion, keeping your movements as small and focused as possible. The thinner sounding palm-muted single notes contrast with the full chords and are a crucial punk rhythm technique. Think Ramones or Green Day and you'll be on the right lines.

Guitars and backing Jon Bishop Photo Getty

02 DOWNPICKING: '80S THRASH

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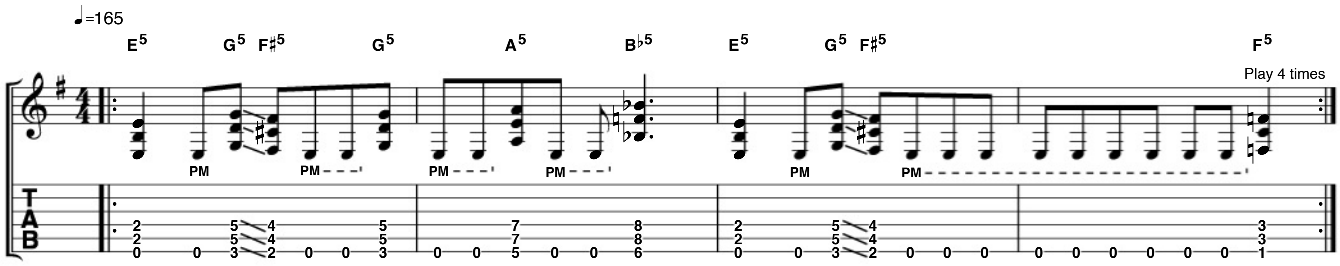

There are a lot of similarities between this example and the previous one, namely the fast tempo, and the downpicked palm-muted powerchords. Once again, that means taking care to emphasise the full chords against the single notes. Typical of thrash metal rhythm though, there's more distortion and the harmony is more complex than punk, with the B♭5 and F5 chords momentarily hinting at the Locrian mode.

03 DOWNPICKING: '00S GARAGE/POST-PUNK

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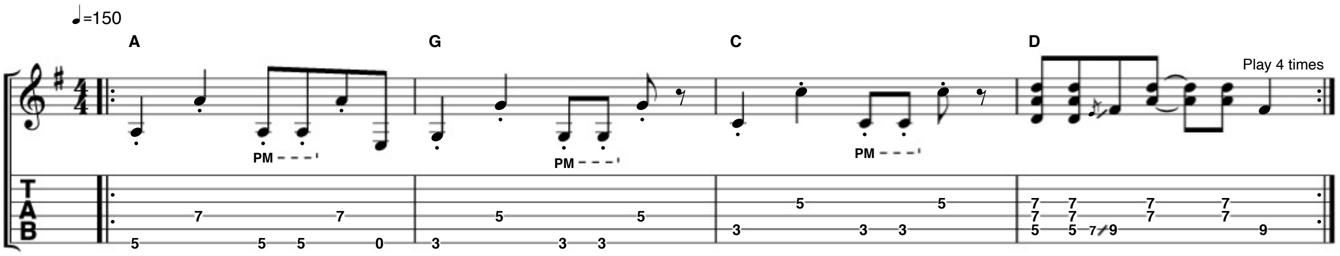

The turn of the century saw a post-punk and garage rock revival, with acts like The Strokes and The Hives seeing major success. Our example exploits the octave interval, and downpicking is once again the order of the day. Dig in with a bridge pickup selected and a light overdrive tone. The sound of the guitar being hit hard and sending the amp into overdrive is more important than tickling the guitar with a higher gain setting.

04 FUNK CHORDS

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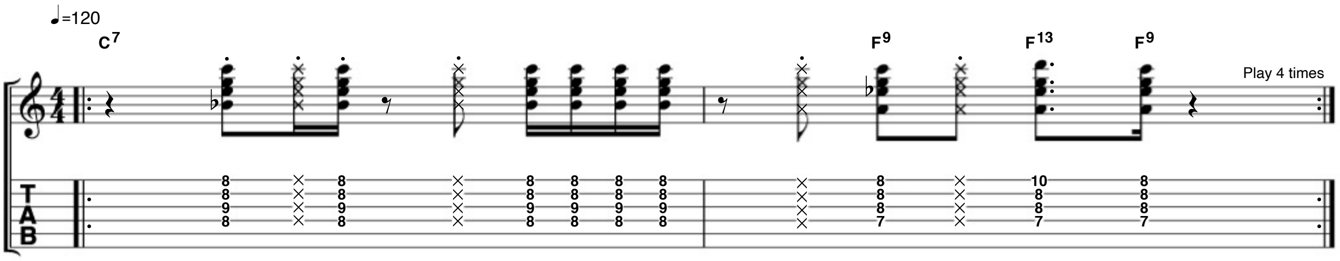

We're firmly in James Brown/Jimmy Nolen territory here, with trademark 9th and 13th chords (as heard in Brown's *Get Up…*) and super-tight 'in-the-pocket' timing. If you struggle with the rhythm, play fewer strums so that the timing is always your main focus. You can come back and perfect the riff later if you want to.

05 16TH-NOTE DISCO

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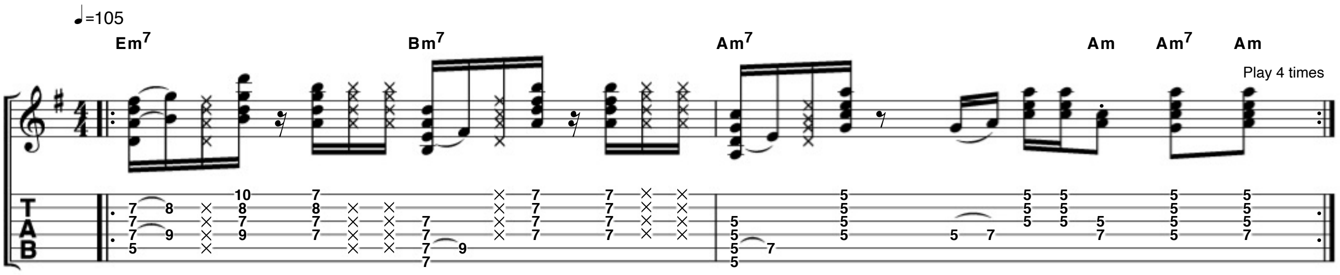

This example is inspired by legendary disco strummer Nile Rodgers, who has been a prolific hit machine since the '70s. For this one simply select a neck single coil, dial in a lively clean tone and strum those funky 16th-note rhythms. We recommend using a thin pick (Rodgers himself uses 0.5mm picks). The flexibility just gives a smoother stroke across the strings that suits the sound of the constant 16ths.

06 90S FUNK-ROCK STRING MUTING

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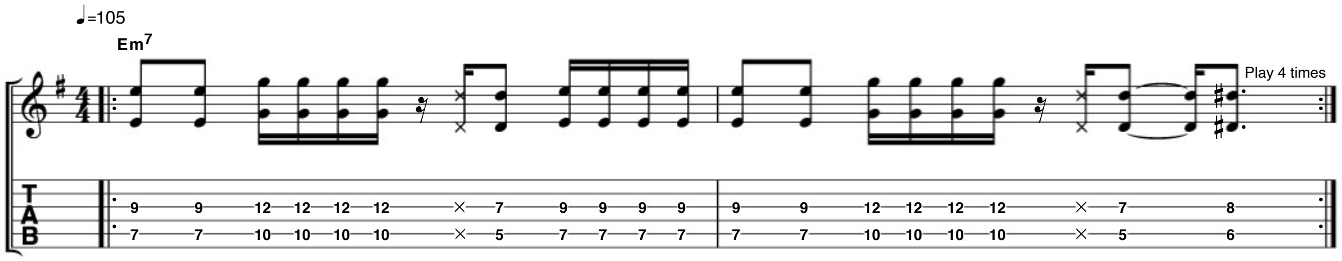

Here we're taking inspiration from funk-rock greats Jane's Addiction, Red Hot Chili Peppers and Rage Against The Machine with a combination of octaves and 16th-note strumming. The Chilis' John Frusciante has almost superhuman string-muting abilities (check out how he *strums* the two-string shapes in *Scar Tissue*). And though the shapes are different here, the principle is the same – so be sure to stub free fingers up against the idle strings.

07 JAZZ "VOICE LEADING"

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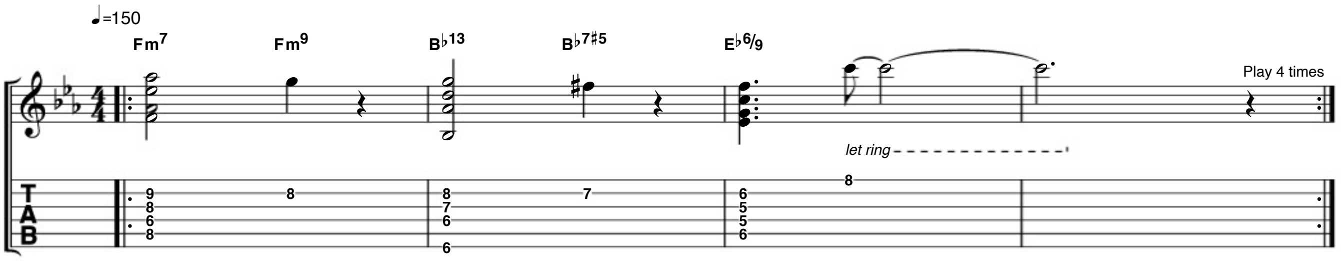

This is a concept whereby the top notes (though bass or middle work, too) of a chord progression act as a melody that leads into and implies the next chord. There aren't really any rules other than the need for your melody to catch your listener's ear. You can introduce new melody notes, or just let the chord tones form the tune. Check out our tab example and listen to Wes Montgomery and Joe Pass for inspiration.

08 ESSENTIAL FINGERSTYLE

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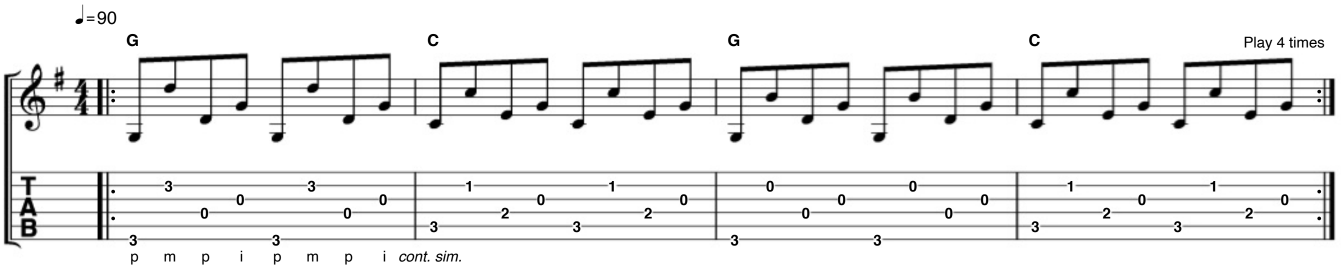

Our folk example combines a bassline with melody notes to create a flowing fingerpicked part. It's a commonly used picking pattern than can be applied to countless chords and progressions. Our advice is to spend time on the picking pattern, working with open strings first so you don't have to worry about the changes. When you've got it down, try applying it to as many chords as possible.

09 70S PENTATONIC ROCK

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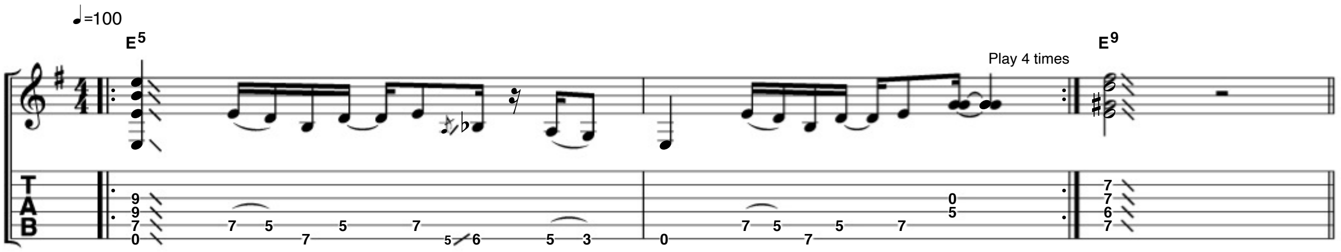

The next example is inspired by '70s supergroups such as Led Zeppelin and Bad Company. The E minor pentatonic scale provides a tried and tested canvas to create rock riffs. We've also included the ♭5th blue note (B♭) to add that dirty, blues rock flavour. The riff is repeated four times and finished off with a funky E9 chord.

10 80S ROCK

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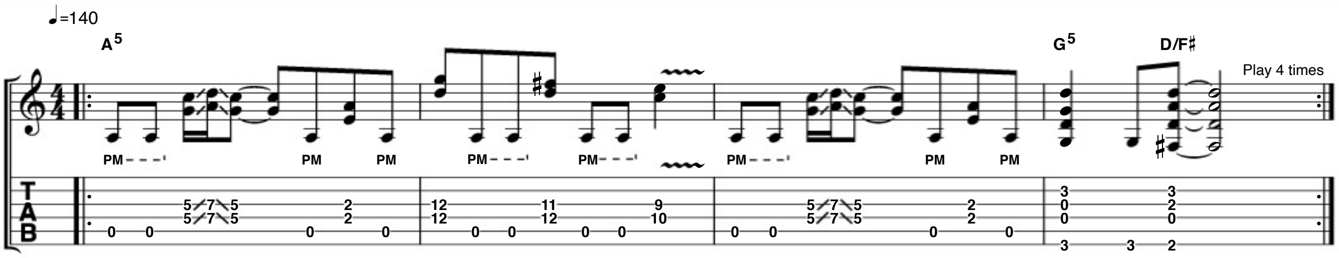

This example will help you play in the style of acts like Van Halen, Def Leppard and Bon Jovi in their '80s pomp. Notice how we're using the open fifth string as a repeating root note, with doublestops added on the third and fourth strings. Use palm-muting to keep the fifth string under control.

11 00S STONER METAL

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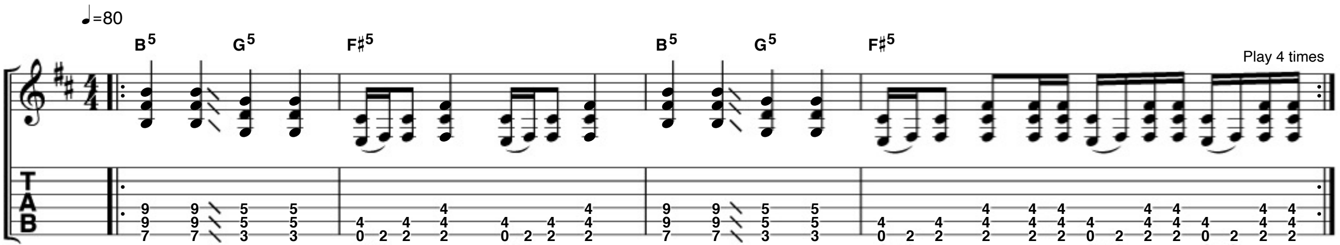

For this example, we wind the tempo down and lay into those low register powerchords. We're in standard tuning here, but this is the kind of riff that'd work better played in a lower tuning or on a baritone guitar. D, C# or C standard are good starting points, or try out the "drop" equivalents where the sixth string is tuned down by a tone.

JIMI HENDRIX

A master of funk, rock and soul – and he even used jazz chords! Jimi Hendrix was a true all-round rhythm machine!

12 EXTENDED CHORD RHYTHMS

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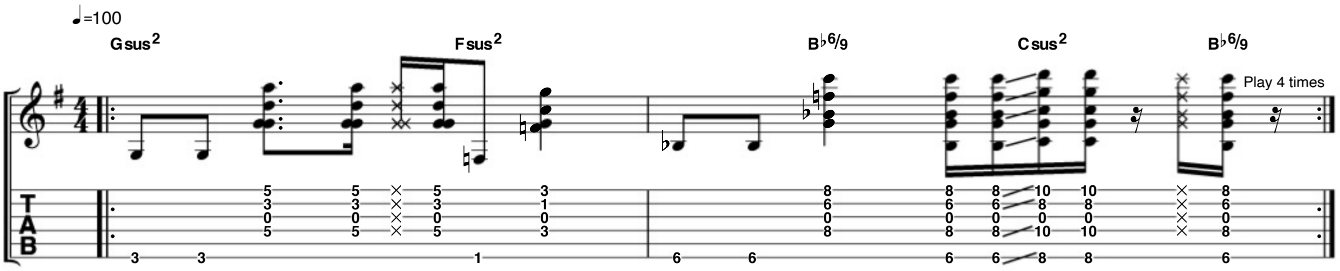

Our first Jimi-style example is inspired by songs like *Castles Made Of Sand* and *Angel*, and uses chords with a thumb-fretted root note on the sixth string. Another key aspect is the open third string which rings out against the moving shape sometimes in harmony and sometimes creating dissonance.

13 FUNK-ROCK

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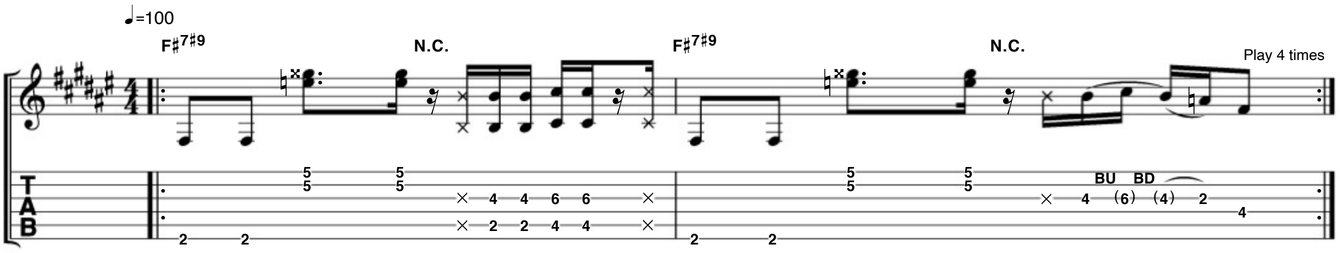

Our second example is inspired by tracks like *Foxy Lady* and *Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)*, and utilises the classic 7#9 "Hendrix chord" – a simple jazz voicing that Jimi made regular use of. Octave shapes and some 'in-between' lead licks complete the Hendrix package.

PRINCE

Multi-instrumentalist, multi-stylist, producer and one of a kind, Prince was the pop star who could do it all. We look at a pair of his rhythm tricks...

14 FUNKY CHORDS

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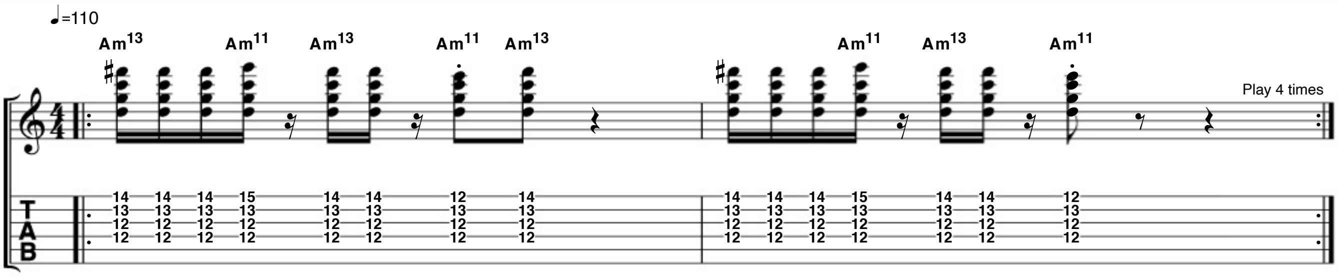
♩=110
Am13
Am11
Am13
Am11
Am13
Am11
Am13
Am11
Play 4 times
T
A
B

With pop, R'n' B and progressive soul all part of the Prince package, funk guitar techniques are a must. The Am11 and Am13 chords we've used are classic Prince-style fingerings. We'd recommend experimenting with a super-clean compressed tone without any reverb for that direct, dry funk sound.

15 ROCK RIFFS

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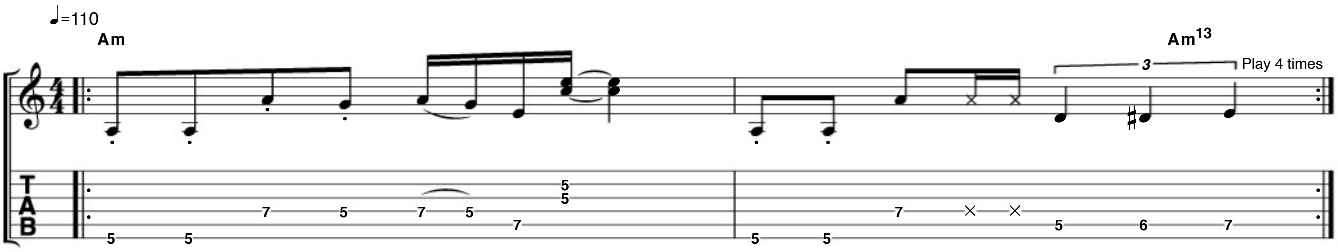
♩=110
Am
Am13
Play 4 times
3
T
A
B

For our second Prince-inspired example we head into the world of rock. Prince was a great rock guitarist and was no stranger to the overdrive pedal. We've used the A minor pentatonic scale (A C D E G) to create a chorus-style riff that would work alongside our previous funky verse example.

16 PROG METAL POLYRHYTHMS

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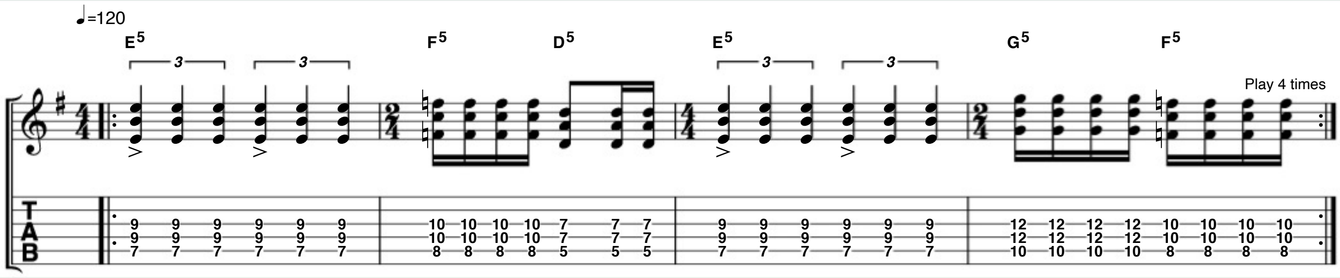
♩=120
E5
F5
D5
E5
G5
F5
3
3
3
3
Play 4 times
T
A
B

The '90s saw the worlds of prog and metal collide, with the rise of now-iconic bands Dream Theater and Tool, from whom we've taken inspiration here. Our riff uses a quarter-note triplet rhythm played against a straight eighth-note groove to set up a polyrhythmic effect. To maintain the prog factor we're swapping time signature every bar, so count to four, then two, then four, then two again to keep time.

17 DROP D ALT-METAL

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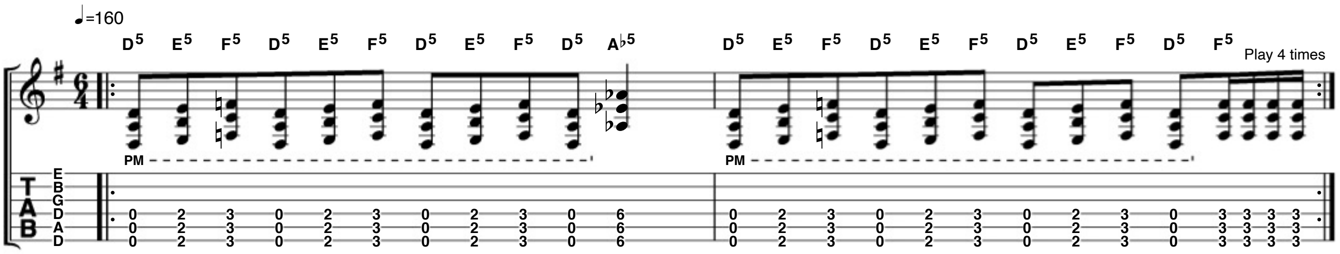
♩=160
D5 E5 F5 D5 E5 F5 D5 E5 F5 D5 A♭5
D5 E5 F5 D5 E5 F5 D5 E5 F5 D5 F5
Play 4 times
PM
PM
E
B
G
D
A
D
T
A
B

Think Soundgarden and Alice In Chains and you'll be in the ballpark here – the Drop D tuning has been used in tracks such as *Outshined* and *Them Bones* respectively. Simply drop your sixth string's pitch down a tone to D, dial in a chunky, high-gain tone and rock out with the one-finger powerchord shapes shown here.

18 CONTEMPORARY MATH-ROCK STRUMMING

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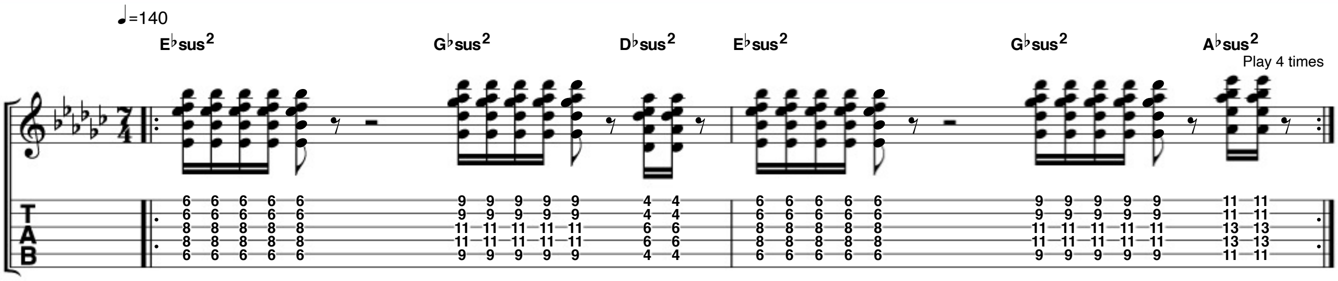

The last few years have seen math-rock evolving greatly, with virtuoso acts like Chon, Covet, Polyphia and Unprocessed treading new ground. We're keeping things simple here, taking a look at some simple chord playing in odd time – specifically 7/4. This means there are seven quarter-note beats in each bar. Aim to make the 16th note strumming snappy and tight.

19 '80S INDIE ARPEGGIOS

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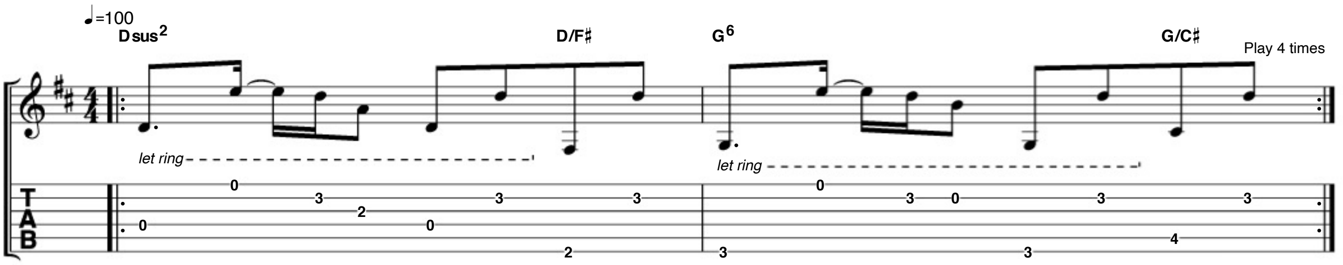

This '80s indie-style example is inspired by bands like The Stone Roses and The Smiths and exploits the chorus effect to add depth and lushness to the clean arpeggios. To emulate the sounds in our example you will need a chorus pedal and a good base clean tone. Try using an 'in-between' pickup setting (position 2 or 4 on a five-way Fender-style selector, or position 2 on a three-way Gibson unit) for some 1980s' indie jangle!

20 DANCE-ROCK ARPEGGIOS

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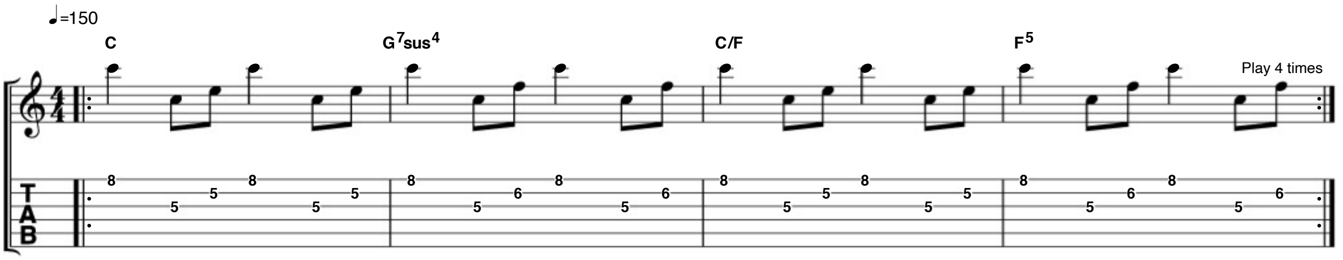

Delay and chorus effects are combined here to create a spacious, modern vibe. This works well on dance tracks and our example is inspired by bands like Bloc Party and Walk The Moon. This part is relatively simple to play and uses the trick of having the bassline change to provide a different harmonic context to the arpeggios, which remain the same.

21 CLASSIC DELAY

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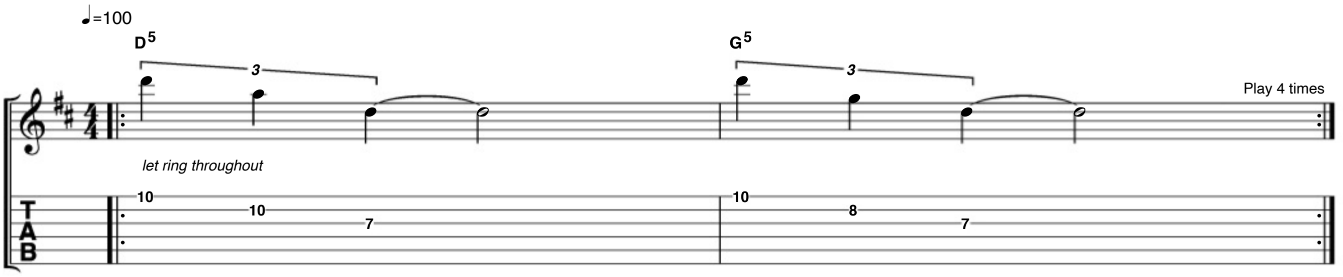
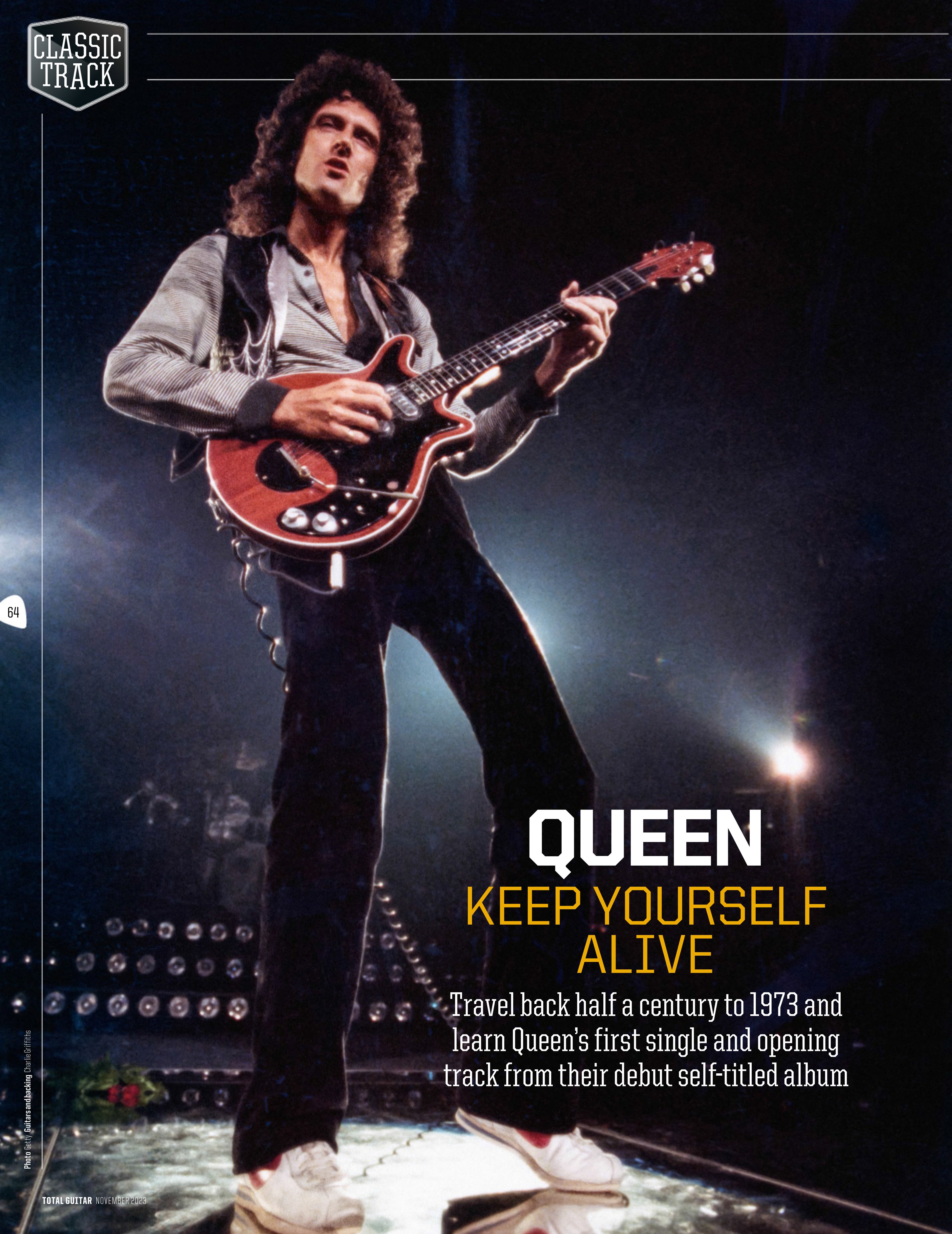


A delay effect can be used to superimpose rhythms into the guitar part. The optimum delay setting for this one is to have one delay with the repeats set to a dotted quaver and another set to a crotchet setting. Some modern delay units have this feature built in, which, though a useful shortcut, can be confusing. You'd tap a crotchet note pulse for the repeats to sound with a dotted eighth timing.



QUEEN

KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE

Travel back half a century to 1973 and learn Queen's first single and opening track from their debut self-titled album

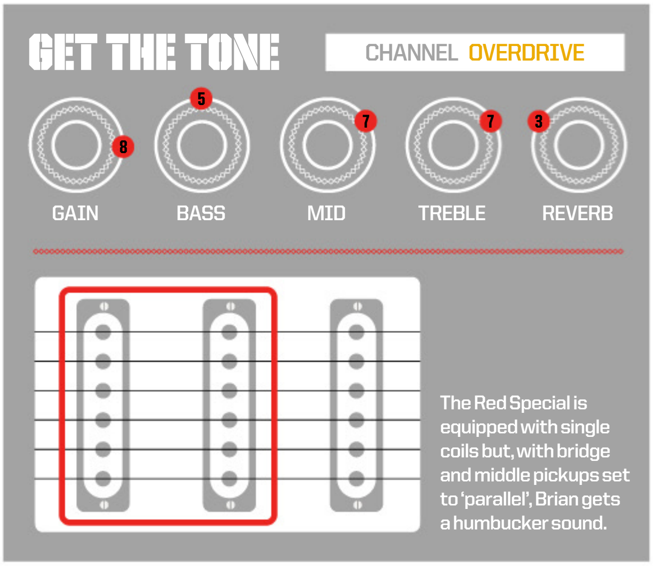
Photo Getty Guitars and backing Charlie Griffiths

SOUND ADVICE

Everything you need to know before playing 'Keep Yourself Alive'

At 76 years old, Brian May is still rocking as hard as ever, and his legendary career with Queen has now spanned an incredible five decades. It all started in 1973 with the first song Brian wrote with the band, which contains elements he favoured such as muted galloping rhythms, multitrack harmonies and intricate key changes.

As a rhythm guitarist, Brian uses a combination of chord shapes which he is able to quickly switch between, plus tight single-note riffing. Brian's lead work is melodic with a distinctive voice-like sustain and vibrato. His multi-track guitar arrangements sometimes feature up to five interwoven parts. In our transcription we have created a single playable part which seamlessly moves between rhythm, lead and harmony parts.

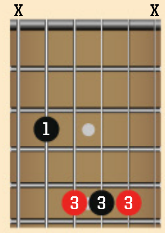


The Red Special is equipped with single coils but, with bridge and middle pickups set to 'parallel', Brian gets a humbucker sound.

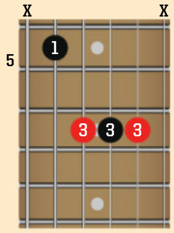
Brian used his Red Special guitar with the bridge and middle pickups in the parallel setting for a humbucking tone. The classic Queen guitar sound is a Vox AC30 with a treble boost pedal in front of the amp, which focuses the low end and adds some extra gain and sustain. Brian also adds a phaser effect which adds dimension. His pick of choice is an Old English Sixpence; its serrated edge adds the perfect scratchy attack.

CHORDS

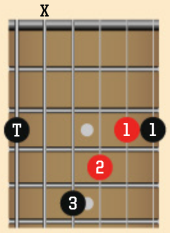
All of the chords played are either major or powerchord shapes. During the chorus Brian uses open chords, while the verses are comprised of the barre chord shapes. Brian has a specific fingering style in that he rarely plays a full six-string barre chord, instead fretting the sixth string with his thumb and muting out the fifth string.



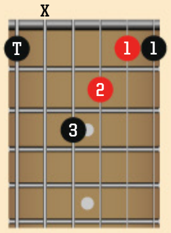
C



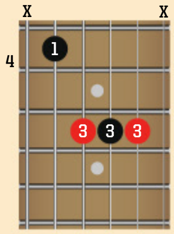
D



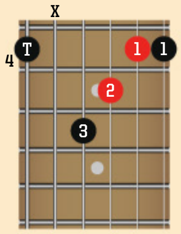
G



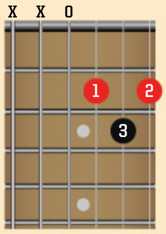
F



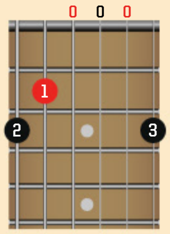
D♭



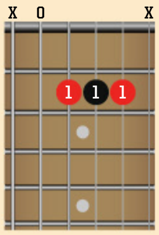
A♭



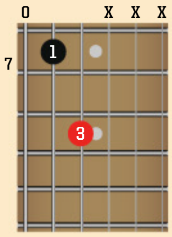
D



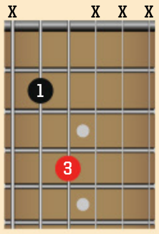
G



A



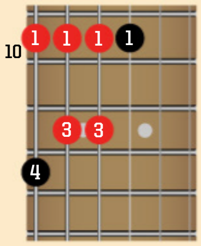
E5



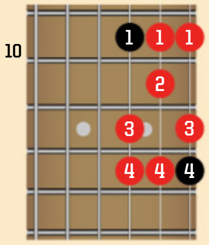
B5

SCALES

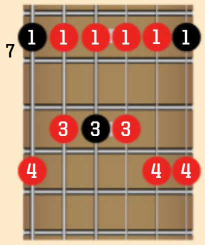
There are lots of key changes throughout the song. The second solo is played over the chorus chords, but, instead of D major, it is transposed to F major (F G A B♭ C D E). For the main framework, Brian seems to be thinking of the relative minor 'D minor pentatonic' shape, so the root note is played with the fourth finger. Some notes from the major scale are also added, plus a minor 3rd, too. The final chorus changes key three times, and for the B major section, Brian plays some B minor pentatonic licks.



F major
pentatonic scale



F major scale
w/added ♭3



B minor
pentatonic scale

QUEEN
KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE

FULL TAB

KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE
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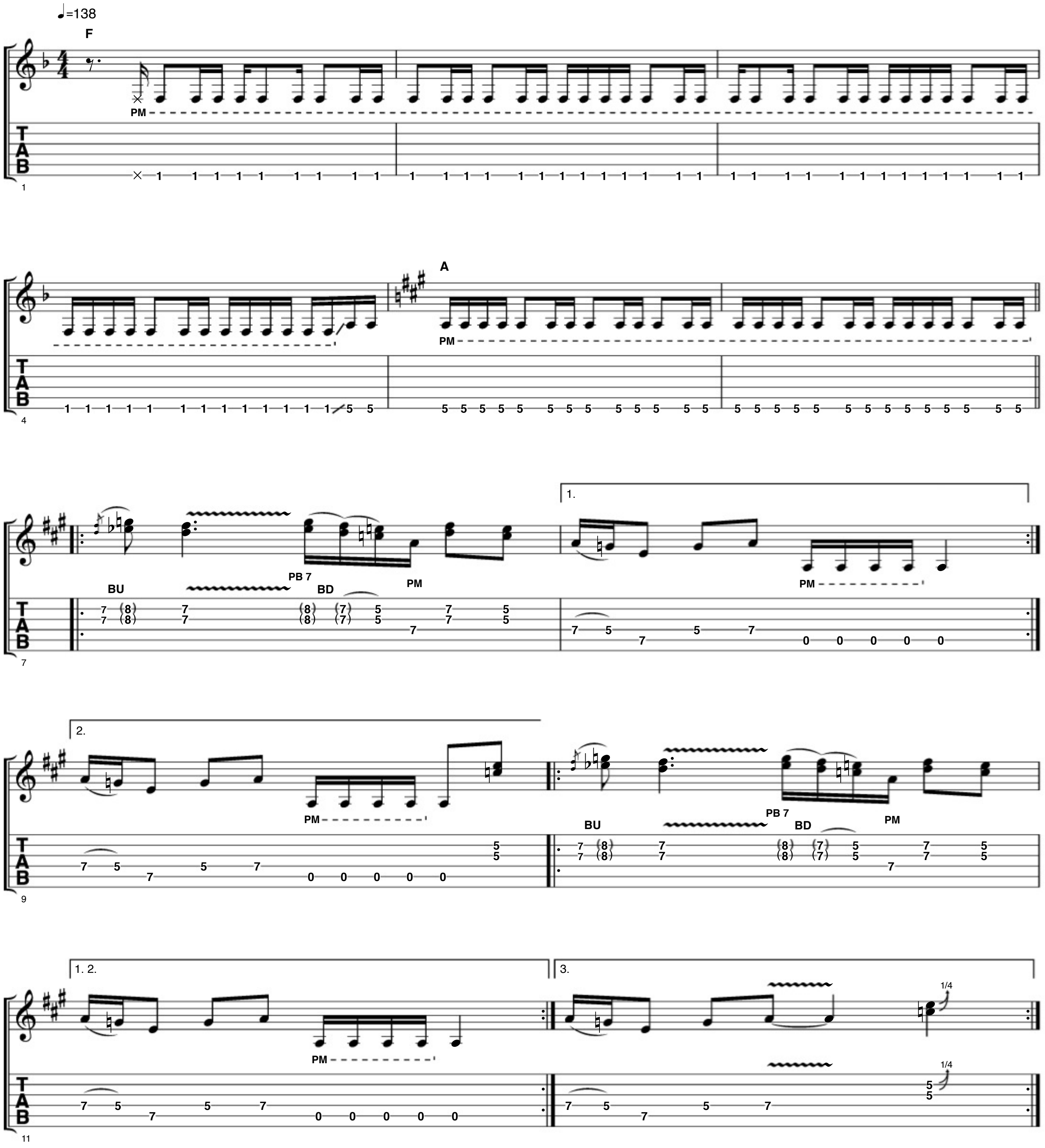
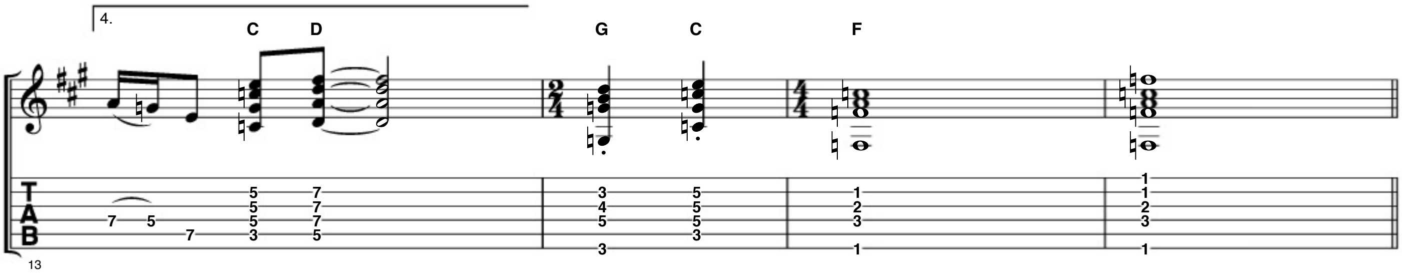
QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Intro** bit.ly/tg377audio

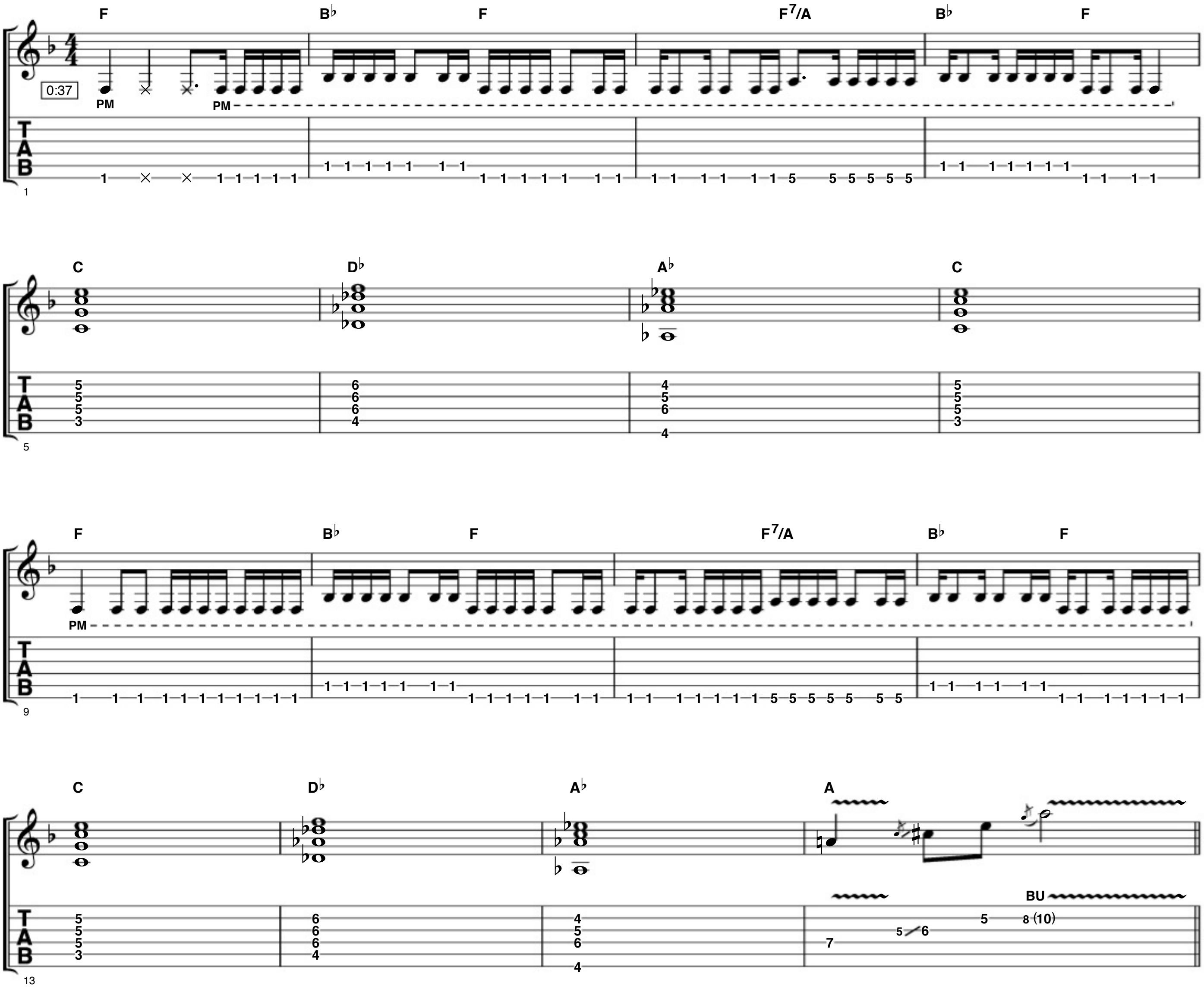

♩=138
F
PM
1
4
A
PM
7
BU
PB 7
BD
PM
1.
PM
2.
PM
9
BU
PB 7
BD
PM
1. 2.
PM
3.
1/4
11

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE Intro (cont'd) **bit.ly/tg377audio**



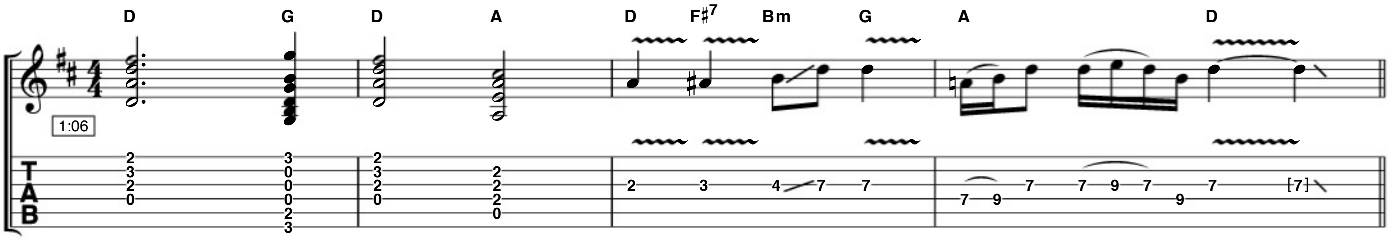
This riff starts part way through bar 1, which makes the rhythm slightly deceptive. To make it easier we've added a raised hi-hat on beat 1 in our audio track to help you get a feel for the pulse. Keep your pick moving down and up in constant 16th notes and strike the string with whatever down- or upstroke the note naturally falls upon.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE Verse 1 **bit.ly/tg377audio**



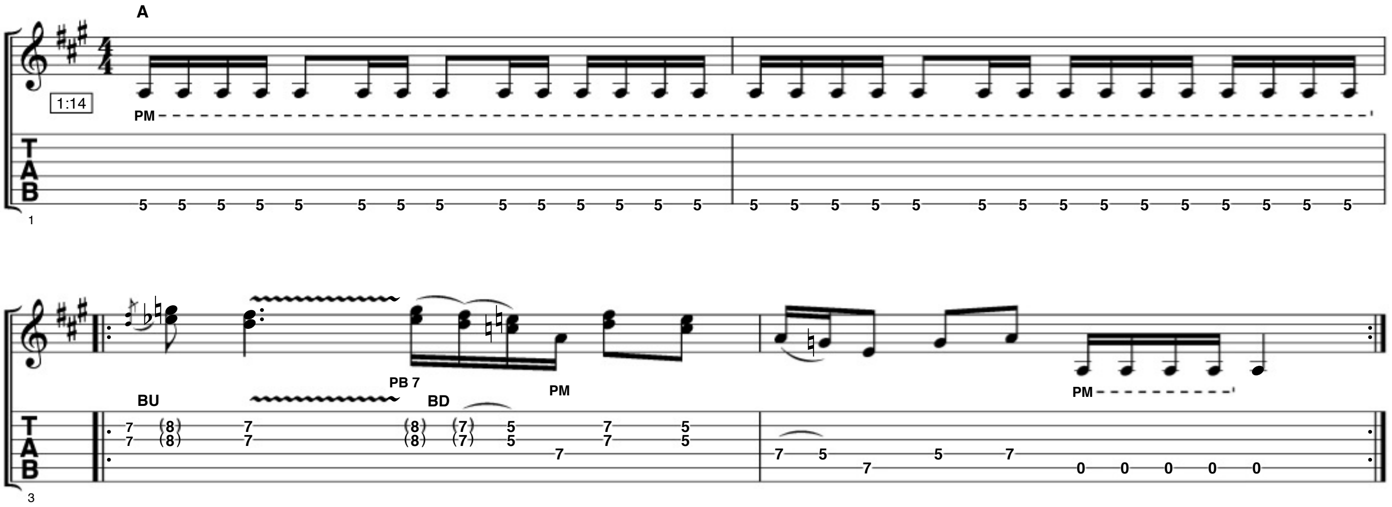
John Deacon's bass is the main driving force outlining the chords here. It's mainly in B major, but with some added passing chords (D♭ and A♭). Using a coin or a pick with a serrated edge will provide the scratchy tone Brian has here, but be aware that he's gently 'tickling' the strings with a soft attack.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Chorus 1** **bit.ly/tg377audio**



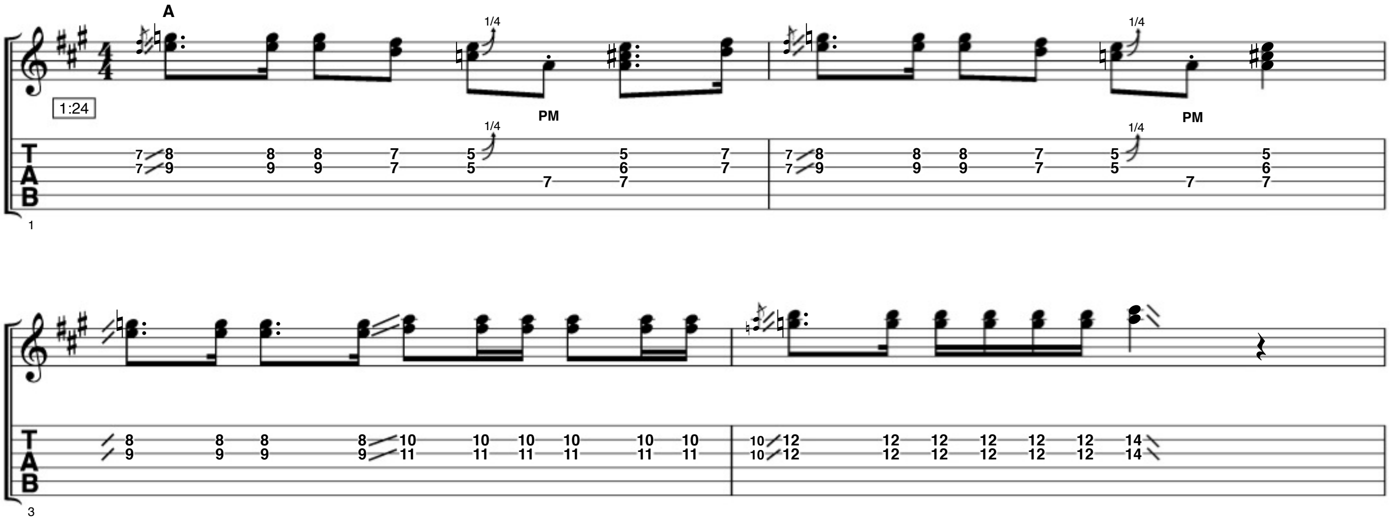
The chorus moves to D major, giving the song a dynamic boot up the rear! Play the open chords with big, loud downstrokes and allow them to sustain. Play the ascending melody with your first finger and make sure to add vibrato. The lick in bar 4 is from the D major pentatonic scale (D E F# A B) which leads us back to the D tonic chord.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Re-intro** **bit.ly/tg377audio**

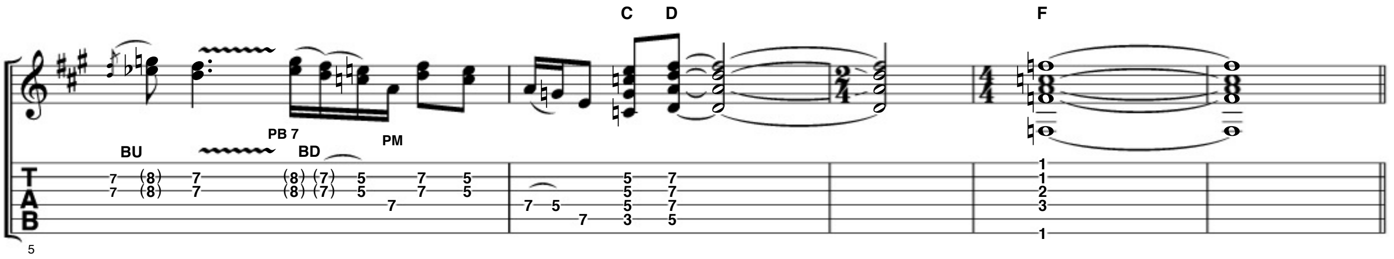


The song now returns to the galloping 16th notes seen in the intro. Rest the side of your palm on the strings near the bridge to create the muted sound. Next, repeat the doublestop riff twice. Fret the bends with your third and fourth fingers, moving both strings a semitone before relaxing the bend and pulling off to a first-finger barre.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Solo 1** **bit.ly/tg377audio**

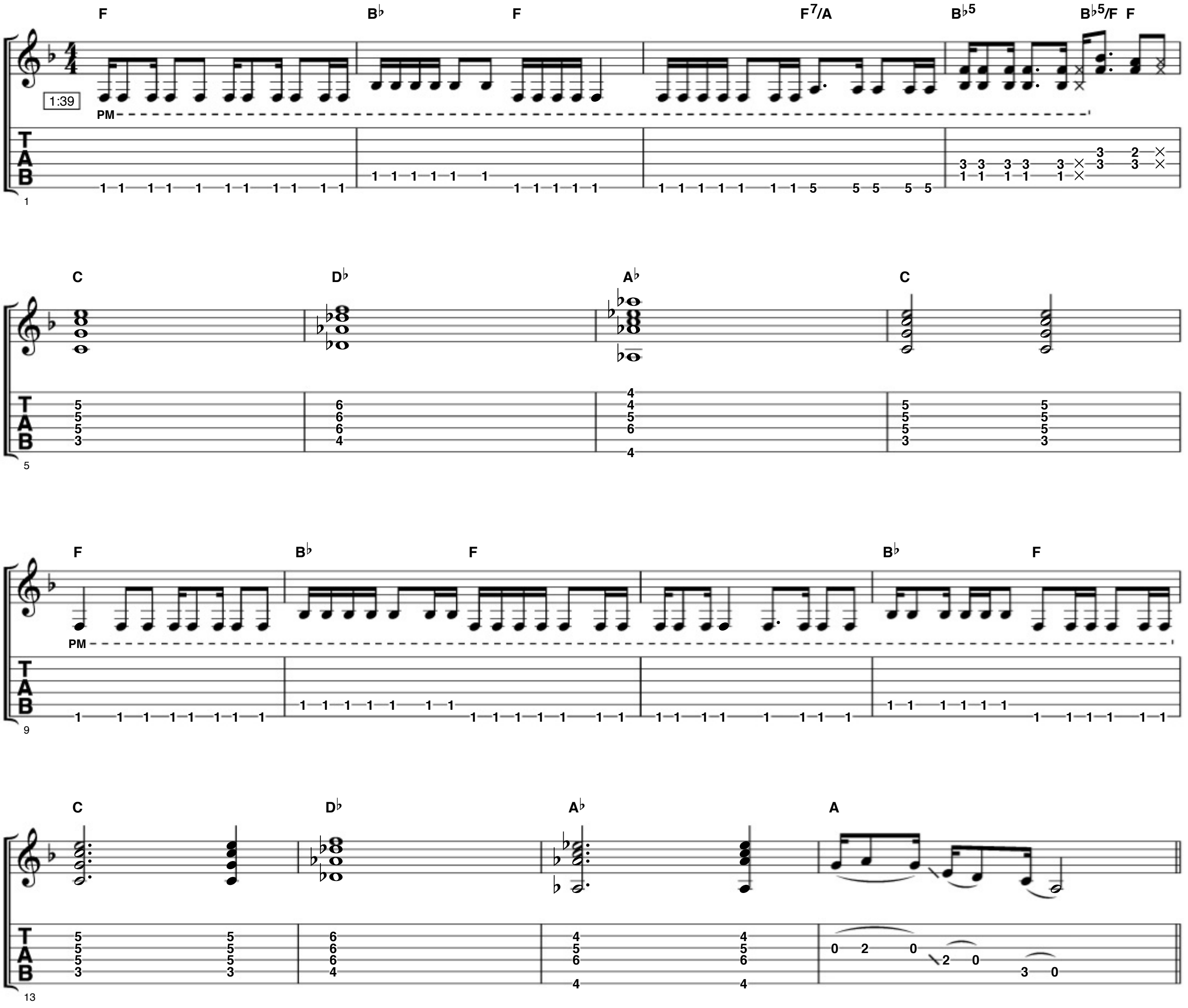


QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Solo 1 (cont'd)** **bit.ly/tg377audio**



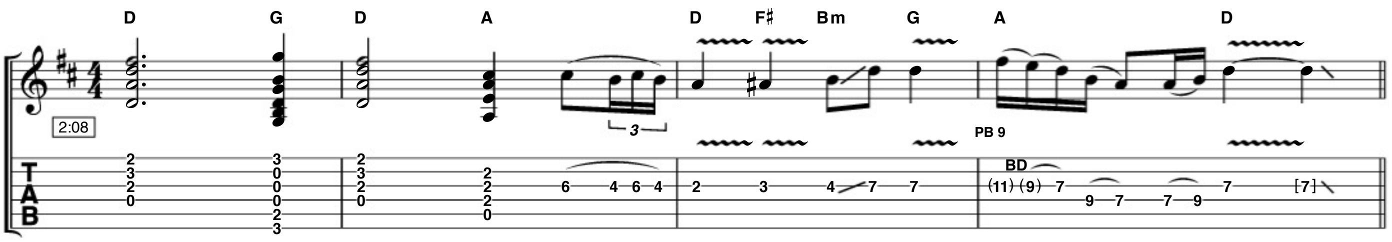
Brian continues the doublestop theme with a solo played mostly on the second and third strings. He's essentially harmonising the A major scale (A B C# D E F# G#) by playing two simultaneous notes. There's a C natural at the 5th fret, which is outside of the scale, but it's played with a slight bend to bring it closer to C# – a common blues technique.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Verse 2** **bit.ly/tg377audio**



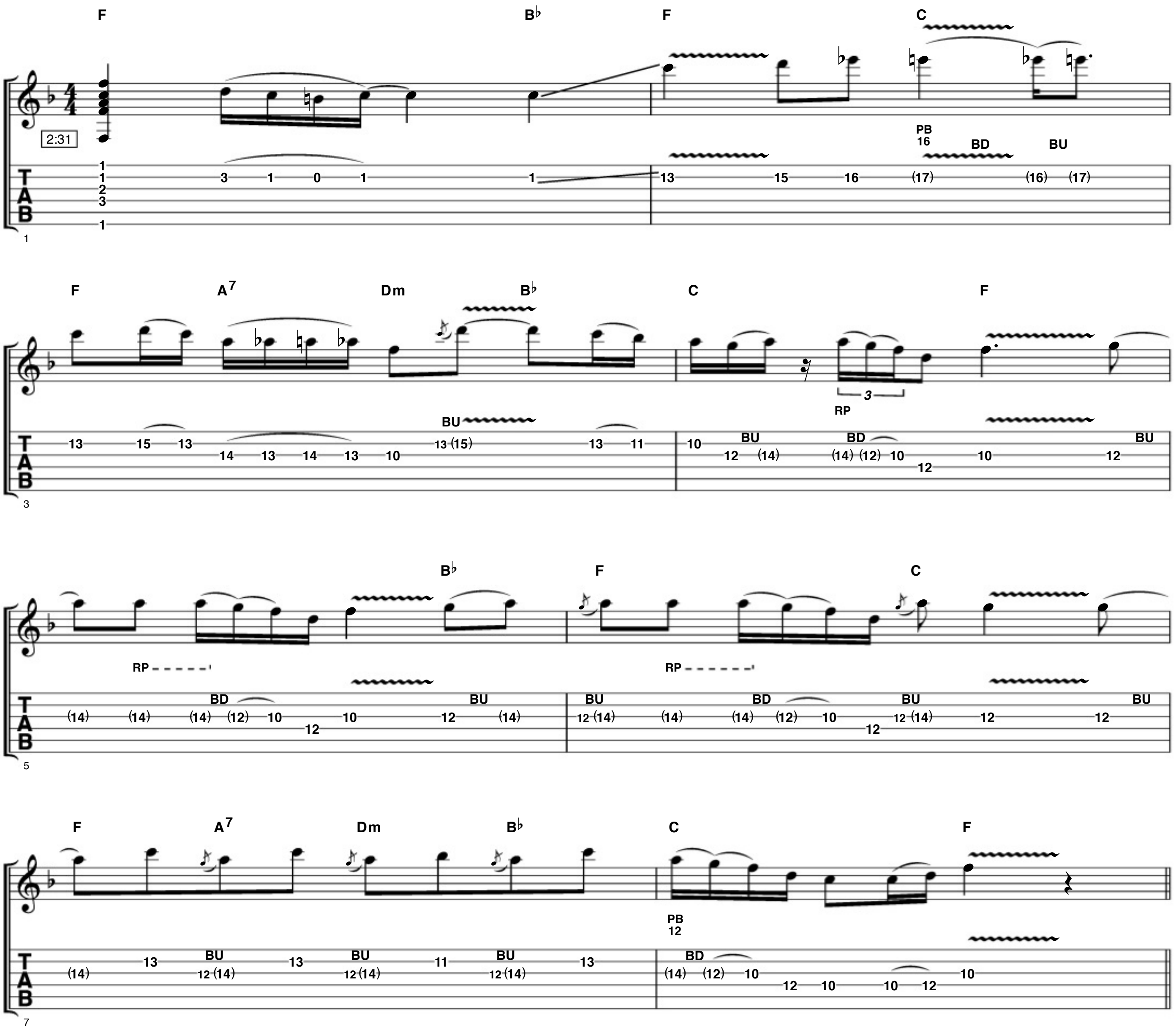
This section is structurally and harmonically the same as verse 1, but the palm-muted single-note rhythm differs in places. Remember that Brian would (and, indeed, still does) improvise these rhythms, and it's unlikely that he'd play the part exactly the same way twice, so we're giving you the royal assent to experiment for yourself here!

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Chorus 2** bit.ly/tg377audio


D
G
D
A
D
F♯
Bm
G
A
D
2:08
3
PB 9
BD
T
A
B

This chorus follows the same structure as chorus 1, but Brian adds some extra inflections to the melody, starting with a trilling lick on the 4th and 6th frets, plus a 9th-fret pre-bend at the start of the D major pentatonic lick.

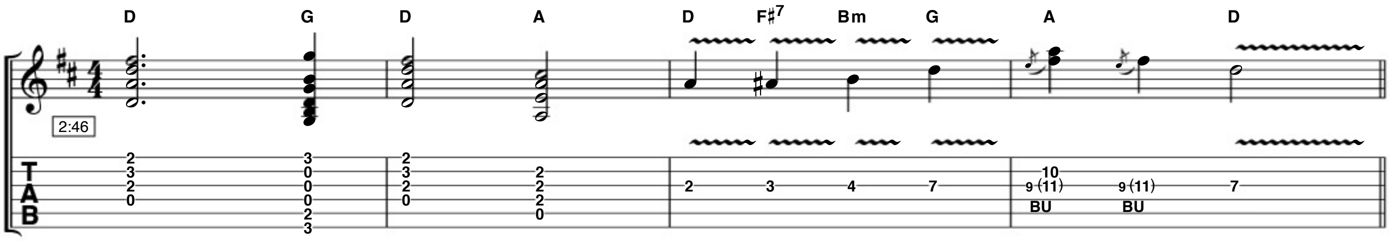
QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Solo 2** bit.ly/tg377audio


F
B♭
F
C
2:31
PB 16
BD
BU
1
F
A7
Dm
B♭
C
F
3
RP
BU
BD
3
B♭
F
C
RP
BU
BD
5
F
A7
Dm
B♭
C
F
PB 12
BD
BU
7
T
A
B

This solo is played over the chorus chord changes, but the whole section is transposed from D major to F major (F G A B♭ C D E). Brian mainly uses the F major pentatonic scale (F G A C D), but he adds passing notes here and there. One of Brian's most interesting techniques is his use of pre-bends, often played without a following downward bend. His reason for this is that it enables a downward-pitched vibrato, which has a subtle effect, distinct from 'upward' vibrato.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Chorus 3**

bit.ly/tg377audio



Again, the chorus brings us back to the triumphant key of D major, and begins with the open chords we've seen before. Once again, ascend the third string using vibrato on each note, but no sliding. The final lick here features a third-string bend against a fretted second-string note – known as an oblique bend.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Interlude**

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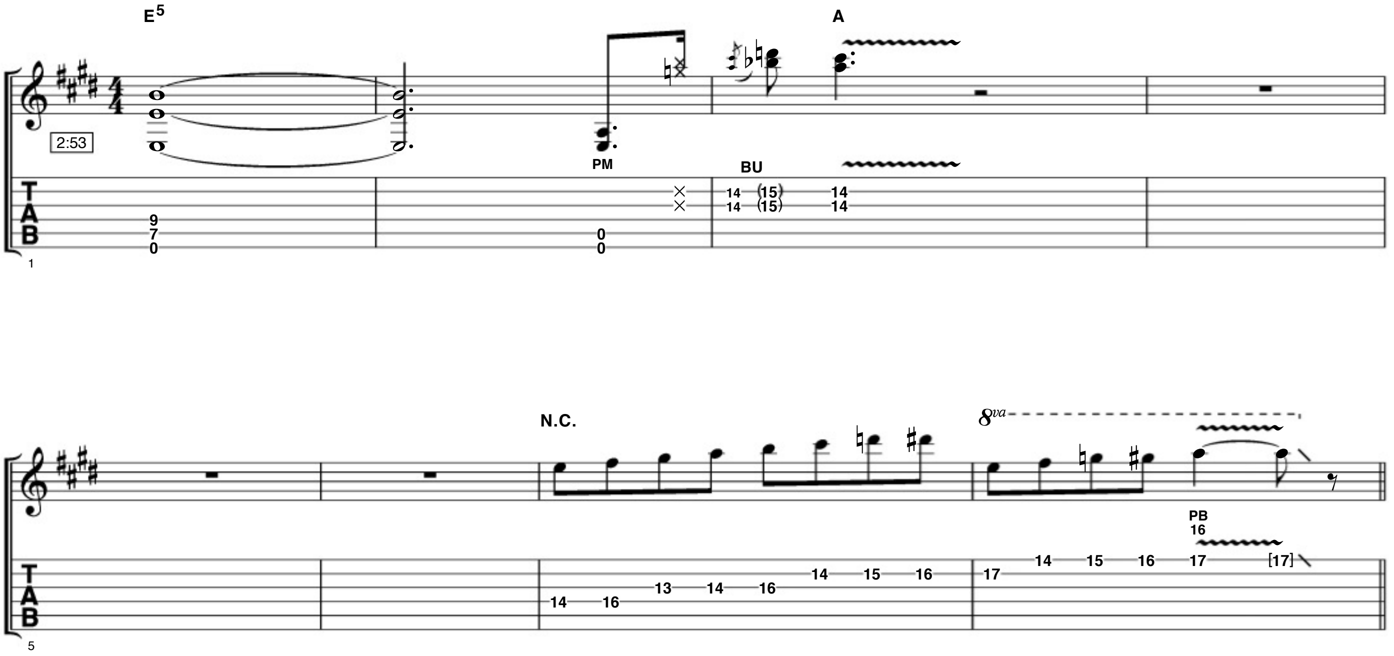
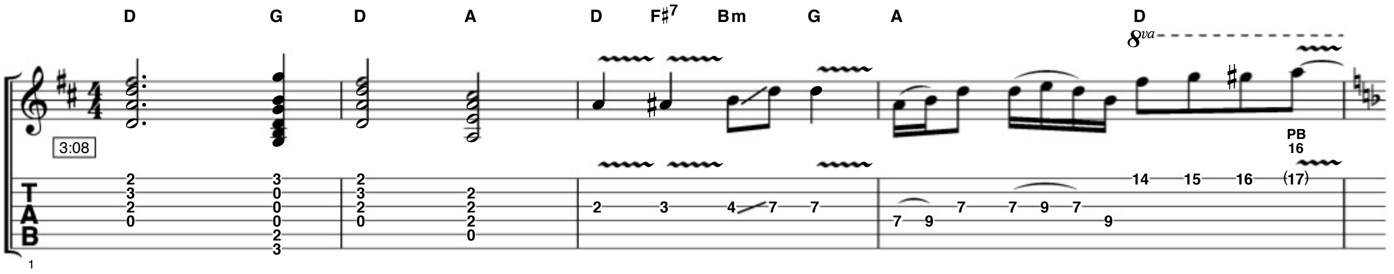


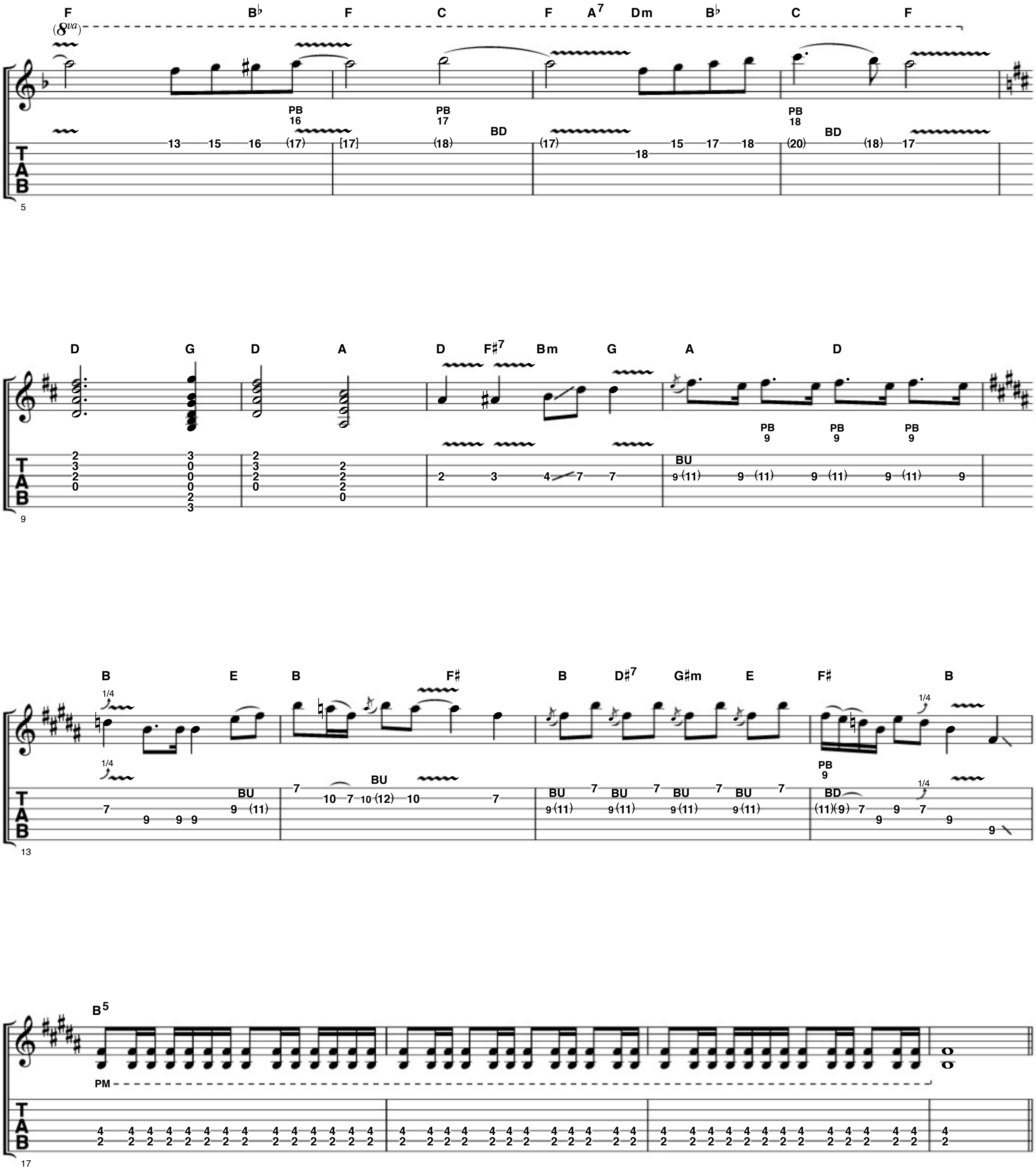
This section moves to the key of E major (E F♯ G♯ A B C♯ D♯) and starts with a sustained E powerchord, then a bluesy doublestop lick. After three bars of rest comes a harmonised ascending scale. Most of the notes are from the E major scale (though D and G are not), and the section ends with a semitone pre-bend at the 16th fret.

QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Chorus 4**

bit.ly/tg377audio



QUEEN KEEP YOURSELF ALIVE **Chorus 4 (cont'd)** **bit.ly/tg377audio**


F
B♭
F
C
F
A7
Dm
B♭
C
F
(8va)
PB 16
PB 17
BD
PB 18
BD
5
D
G
D
A
D
F♯7
Bm
G
A
D
BU
PB 9
9
B
E
B
F♯
B
D♯7
G♯m
E
F♯
B
1/4
BU
BD
PB 9
13
B5
PM
17
T
A
B

The final chorus changes key three times and starts with the D major open chords, followed by another variation on the major pentatonic lick. Next, the key changes to F major where Brian switches to a harmony part played on the first string. For the next four bars there's a return to D major before a final key change to B major, over which Brian plays some bluesy B minor pentatonic licks. The song ends with palm-muted B powerchords in a rhythm similar to the intro.

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OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

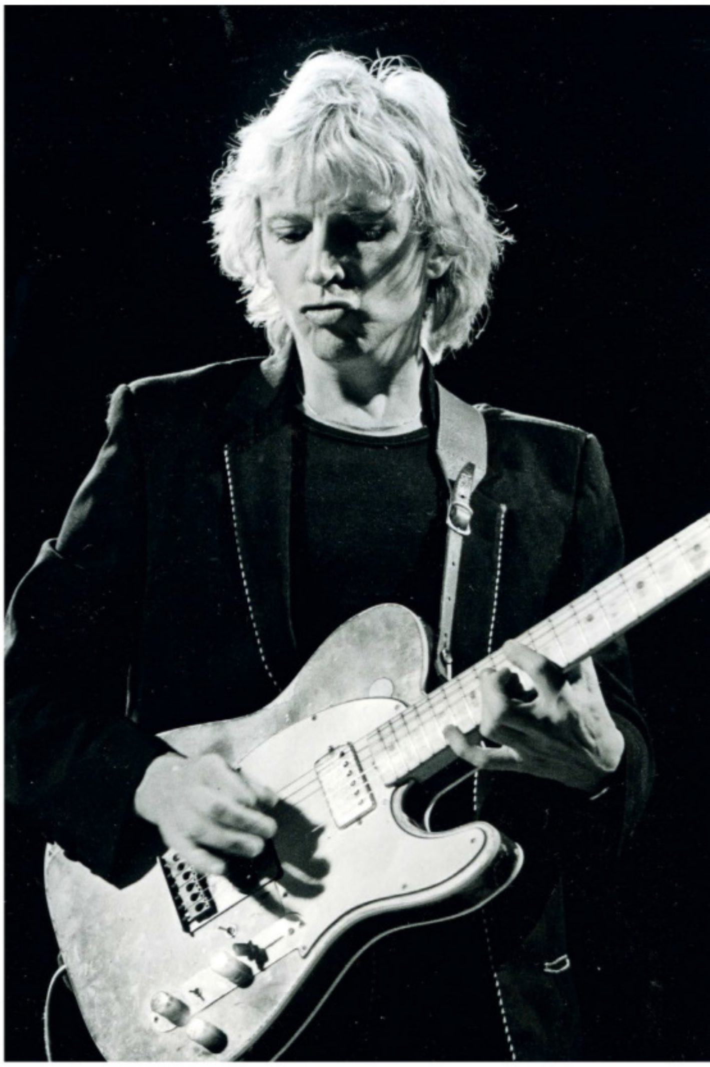
THE POLICE

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

Master Andy Summers' arpeggios or jam along with barre chords – it's up to you!

The Police released *Every Breath You Take* in 1983 on their final album, *Synchronicity*. Andy Summers' guitar part has become one of those 'must know' riffs, up there with the likes of *Layla*, *Smoke On The Water* and *Stairway To Heaven*.

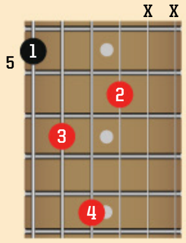
The main riff follows the chords A–F#m–D–E, and many classic songs use this progression, including Ben E King's *Stand By Me* and *Don't Dream It's Over* by Crowded House. Reprising shapes from 1979's *Message In A Bottle*, Summers changes these chords to finger-twisting 'add9' voicings, providing a richer sound, but, in turn, making the riff tougher to play. There's no real shortcut but we do recommend practising in a different key, higher up the fretboard where the frets are closer together. If you prefer to strum along, ditch the 'add9's and just play basic major and minor chords. Finally, note that the original track was recorded with the guitar tuned down a semitone, but we're in concert pitch for simplicity.



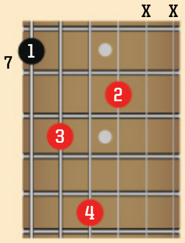
Guitars and backing: Jon Bishop Photography: Pictorial Press Ltd/Alamy Stock Photo

CHORDS

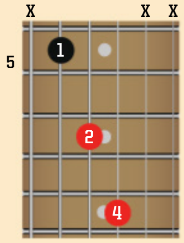
Most of the chords present quite a challenge, thanks to the Andy Summers' finger stretches. Bear in mind, however, that these are the shapes for the main guitar riff – you could take a simpler approach and jam along using easy major and minor chords. Simply play A in place of Aadd9, F#m in place of F#madd9, and so on. In each case just move your fourth finger down two frets.



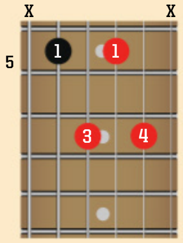
Aadd9



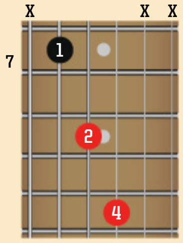
Badd9



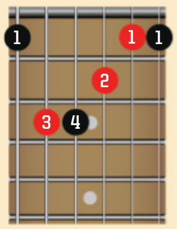
Dadd9



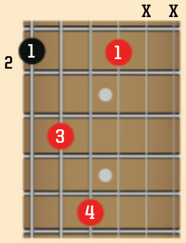
D7



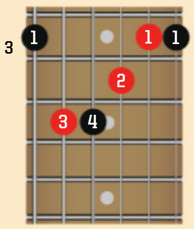
Eadd9



F



F#madd9



G

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE
Words and Music by Sting
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Backing track (bit.ly/tg377audio)
This song comes with a backing track. Enter the above link into your web browser of choice; press play and jam along, guitaraoke style!

SONGSHEET

Every Breath You Take

Aadd9 / / / / / / / F#madd9 / / / / / / /

Dadd9 / / / Eadd9 / / / Aadd9 / / / / / / /

Verse 1

Aadd9 F#madd9
Every breath you take, every move you make
Dadd9 Eadd9
Every bond you break, every step you take
F#madd9
I'll be watching you

Verse 2

Aadd9 F#madd9
Every single day, every word you say
Dadd9 Eadd9
Every game you play, every night you stay
Aadd9
I'll be watching you

Bridge

Dadd9
Oh can't you see
D7 Aadd9
You belong to me
Badd9
How my poor heart aches
Eadd9
with every step you take

Verse 3

Aadd9 F#madd9
Every move you make, every vow you break
Dadd9 Eadd9
Every smile you fake, every claim you stake
F#madd9
I'll be watching you

Middle

F
Since you've gone I been lost without a trace
G
I dream at night I can only see your face
F
I look around but it's you I can't replace
G
I feel so cold and I long for your embrace
F
I keep crying baby, baby

Instrumental

Aadd9 / / / / / / / F#madd9 / / / / / / /
Please...
Dadd9 / / / Eadd9 / / / F#madd9 / / / / / / /

Aadd9 / / / / / / / F#madd9 / / / / / / /

Dadd9 / / / Eadd9 / / / Aadd9 / / / / / / /

Repeat Bridge

Verse 4

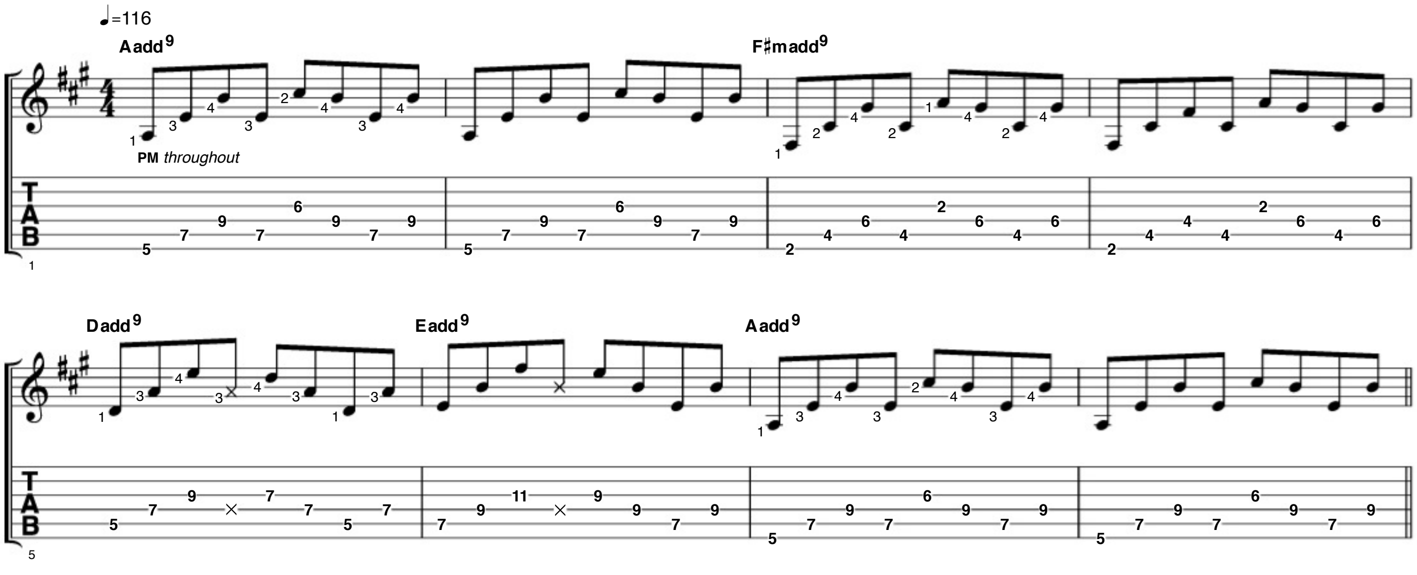
Aadd9 F#madd9
Every move you make, every vow you break
Dadd9 Eadd9
Every smile you fake, every claim you stake
F#madd9
I'll be watching you
Dadd9 Eadd9
Every move you make, every step you take
F#madd9
I'll be watching you

Outro

Aadd9 F#madd9 Dadd9
I'll be watching you

Repeat to fade

THE POLICE EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE **Intro** **bit.ly/tg377audio**

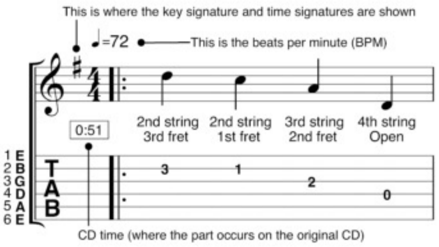


Start by practising the chord changes with a light strum so you can focus your attention on those tough stretches without worrying about picking. When you attempt the picking, stay on one chord so you can concentrate on your pick hand. The line can be picked with all downstrokes or a mixture of down- and upstrokes – as Summers does.

TAB GUIDE

Get more from TG by understanding our easy-to-follow musical terms and signs

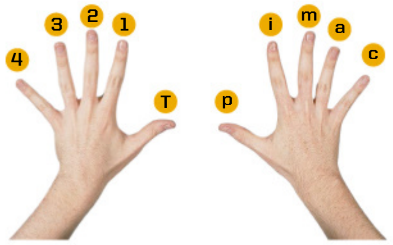
What is tab?


This is where the key signature and time signatures are shown
♩=72
This is the beats per minute (BPM)
0:51
2nd string 3rd fret
2nd string 1st fret
3rd string 2nd fret
4th string Open
1 E
2 B
3 G
4 D
5 A
6 E
T A B
3
1
2
0
CD time (where the part occurs on the original CD)

Tab is short for tablature, a notational system used to give detailed information as to where notes should be played on the fretboard. Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines that represent the strings of the guitar, from the sixth (thick) string at the bottom to the first (thin) string at the top. On these lines, numbers represent which frets you place your fingers. For example, an A note on the 2nd fret, third string, will be shown as a number '2' on the third line down on the tab. Unfretted strings are shown with a 'o'. The key and time signatures are shown in the notation. TG also includes a timestamp to tell you where in the original track you'll find each example and tempo expressed in beats per minute.

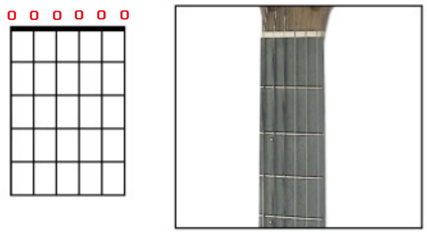
FRET BOXES: CHORDS, SCALES AND CAPO NOTATION

HAND LABELLING


3
2
1
4
T
i
m
a
c
p

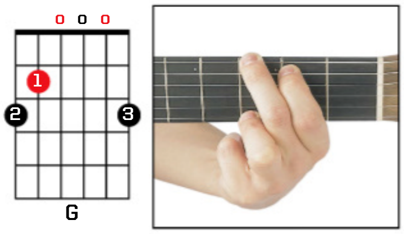
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger. Fretting hand: **1, 2, 3, 4, (T)** Picking hand: **p (thumb), i (index), m (middle), a (annular), c (little finger)**

NUT AND FRETBOARD



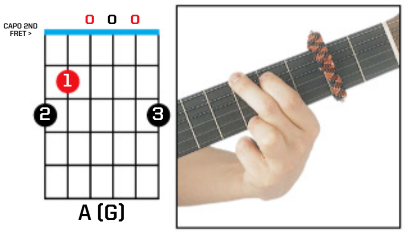
This fretbox diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

CHORD EXAMPLE



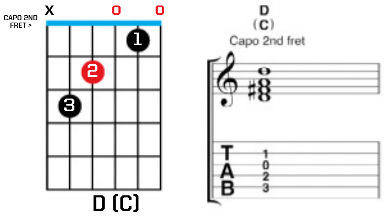
This diagram represents a G chord. The 'o's are open strings, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A black 'o' or circled number is the root note (here, G).

CAPO EXAMPLE


CAPO 2ND FRET >
o o o
1
2
3
A (G)

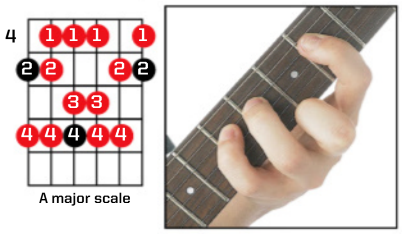
The blue line in the diagram represents a capo - for this A chord, place it at the 2nd fret. Capos change the fret number ordering. Here, the original 5th fret now becomes the 3rd fret, 7th fret now 5th fret, etc.

CAPO NOTATION


CAPO 2ND FRET >
X
o o
1
2
3
D (C)
D
(C)
Capo 2nd fret
T A B
1
0
2
3

Here the chord looks like a C in the tab, but the capo on the 2nd fret raises the pitch to make it a D. The 2nd fret capo'd notes are shown with a '0' in the tab as if they were open strings.

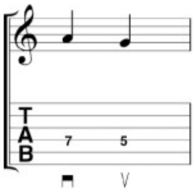
SCALE EXAMPLE


4
1 1 1 1
2 2 2 2
3 3
4 4 4 4 4
A major scale

The fret box diagram illustrates the fret hand fingering for the A major scale using black dots for root notes and red dots for other scale tones. The photo shows part of the scale being played on the fourth string with the first, third and fourth fingers.

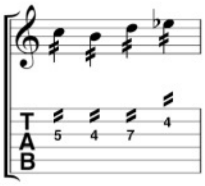
GUITAR TECHNIQUES: PICKING

DOWN AND UP-PICKING



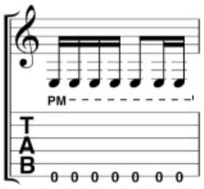
The symbols under the tab tell you the first note is to be down-picked and the second note is to be up-picked.

TREMOLO PICKING



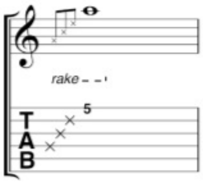
Each of the four notes are to be alternate-picked (down and up-picked) very rapidly and continuously.

PALM MUTING


PM
T A B
0 0 0 0 0 0 0

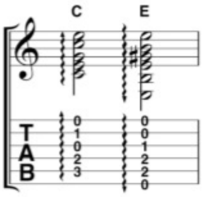
Palm-mute by resting the edge of your picking hand palm on the strings near the bridge saddles.

PICK RAKE



Drag the pick across the strings shown with a single sweep. This is often used to augment a rake's last note.

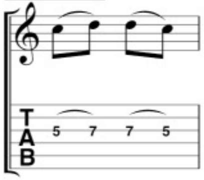
APPREGGIATED CHORD


C
E
T A B
0
1
0
2
3
0
0
1
2
2
0

Play the notes of the chord by strumming across the relevant strings in the direction of the arrow head.

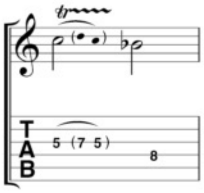
FRETTING HAND

HAMMER-ON & PULL-OFF



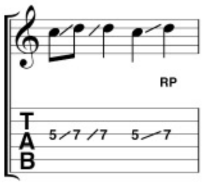
Pick the first note then hammer down on the string for the second note. Pick the third note and pull-off for the fourth note.

NOTE TRILLS



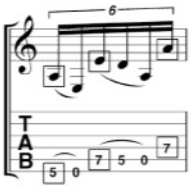
After picking the first note, rapidly alternate between the two notes shown in brackets using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

SLIDES (GLISSANDO)



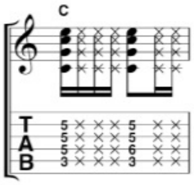
Pick the first note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

FRET-HAND TAPPING



Sound the notes marked with a square by hammering-on/tapping with your fret hand fingers, instead of picking.

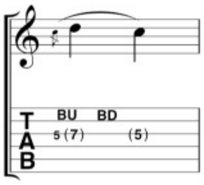
FRET-HAND MUTING



X markings represent notes and strings that are muted by your fret hand when struck by your picking hand.

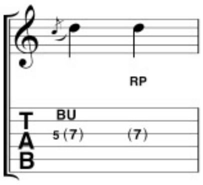
BENDING AND VIBRATO

BEND AND RELEASE



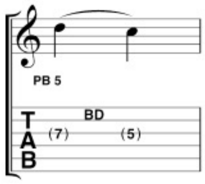
Fret the first note (here, the 5th fret) and bend up to the pitch of the bracketed note, before releasing again.

RE-PICKED BEND



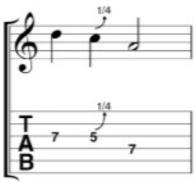
Bend up to the pitch shown in the brackets, then re-pick the note while holding the bent note at the pitch shown.

PRE-BEND



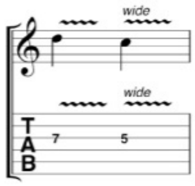
Silently bend the string up from the 5th fret (PB5) to the pitch of the 7th fret note, pick it and release to the 5th fret note.

QUARTER-TONE BEND



Pick the note then bend up a quarter-tone (a very small amount). This is sometimes referred to as a 'blues curl'.

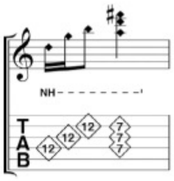
VIBRATO



Your fretting hand vibrates the string by small bend-ups and releases. Exaggerate this effect to create a 'wide' vibrato.

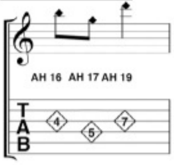
HARMONICS

NATURAL HARMONICS



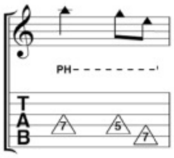
Pick the note while lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS



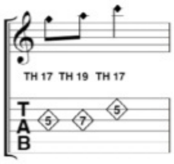
Fret the note as shown, then lightly place your index finger directly over 'x' fret (AH'x') and pick (with a pick, p or a).

PINCHED HARMONICS



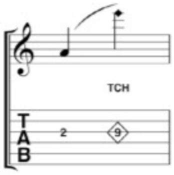
After fretting the note in the triangle, dig into the string with the side of your thumb as you sound it with the pick.

TAPPED HARMONICS



Place your finger on the note as shown, but sound it with a quick pick hand tap at the fret shown (TH17) for a harmonic.

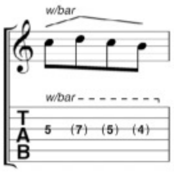
TOUCHED HARMONICS



A previously sounded note is touched above the fret marked TCH (eg, TCH 9) for it to sound a harmonic.

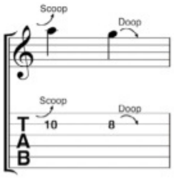
VIBRATO BAR / WHAMMY BAR

WHAMMY BAR BENDS



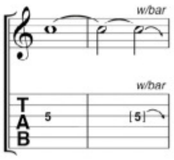
The note is picked as shown, then the vibrato bar is raised and lowered to the pitches shown in brackets.

SCOOP AND DOOP



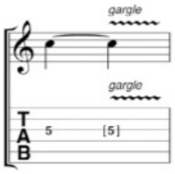
Scoop: depress the bar just before striking the note and release. Doop: lower the bar slightly after picking note.

SUSTAINED NOTE AND DIVEBOMB



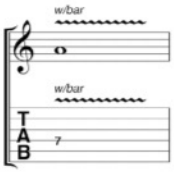
A Note is sustained then the vibrato bar is depressed to slack. The square bracket indicates a further articulation.

GARGLE



Sound the note and 'flick' the vibrato bar with your picking hand so it 'quivers'. This results in a 'gargling' sound!

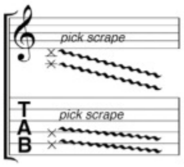
WHAMMY BAR VIBRATO



Gently rock the whammy bar to repeatedly bend the pitch up and down. This sounds similar to fret hand vibrato.

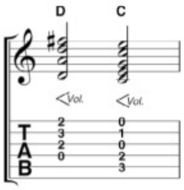
OTHERS

PICK SCRAPE



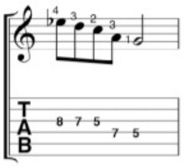
The edge of the pick is dragged either down or up along the lower strings to produce a scraped sound.

VIOLINING



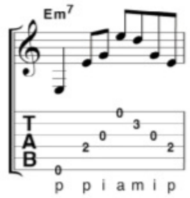
Turn the volume control down, sound the note(s) and then turn the volume up for a smooth fade in.

FINGER NUMBERING



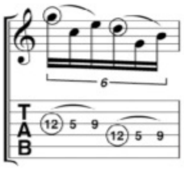
The numbers in the traditional notation refer to the fingers required to play each note.

PIMA DIRECTIONS



Any kind of fingerpicking requirements are shown at the bottom of the tab notation.

PICK HAND TAPPING



Tap (hammer-on) with a finger of your picking hand onto the fret marked with a circle. Usually with 'i' or 'm'.

THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE BEST NEW GEAR

Welcome to the GAS (Gear Acquisition Syndrome*) Station! Every issue, TG scours the market for the hottest new gear and brings you transparent reviews that you can trust. From the smallest of accessories that make your life easier, to big investments, such as brand new guitars, amps and effects pedals – if it's worth your attention, you'll find it here!

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

Our product selection is driven by our love of gear. We select the most exciting products on the market every month to bring you opinions you can trust.

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

We're not gear snobs here at *Total Guitar*. We judge it on whether it looks good, sounds good and plays well – not by the name on the headstock.

NO SNAKE OIL

You won't find us getting hung up on hokey mythology or nonsense marketing speak: we aim to bring you bullsh*t-free opinions on the gear you're interested in.

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

TG review scores are a true reflection of our experts' opinion on the product they've been testing. You'll never find a rating in our mag that has been bought and paid for.

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

We test every product under the conditions that they were designed for. For example, if an amp is designed to be played loud, rest assured that we'll have tested it at rehearsal/gig volumes!

*WHAT IS GAS?

Gear Acquisition Syndrome is the guitar-player's never-ending urge to acquire new gear, irrespective of whether they actually need it. Don't pretend you don't have it – we all do!

BEST BUY AWARD

TG Best Buy Awards are reserved for stand-out products that earn a 4.5 star overall rating. This is the most exciting new gear that you *need* to check out

TOTAL Guitar
BEST BUY
AWARD

PLATINUM AWARD

Reserved for the very best of the best, TG's Platinum Awards are given to class-leading, gamechanging products that score a maximum 5 stars in every category.

TOTAL Guitar
PLATINUM
AWARD

★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★☆☆☆	★☆☆☆☆
SUPERB, A BEST BUY	EXCELLENT	ABOVE AVERAGE KIT	SOME ISSUES	POOR

80 SHERGOLD TELSTAR STANDARD ST14
The '70s Brit-brand drops a new boutique-style solidbody at very tempting price

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Vintage analogue delay like you've never heard before

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Gibson's poster child gets a bonnie upgrade with the Custom Color Series

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Queen of the Tone Age

03

OVERDRIVE
CHORUS
PHASE

MUSICNOMAD
Fret Rocker

01

02

ERNIE BALL
PARADIGM

05

04

ULTRAVIOLET
strymon

START ME UP!

Five awesome new products to get your gear engine revving this month...

MUSICNOMAD PRECISION FRET ROCKER AND FRET GAUGE KIT

1 Maintaining your guitar's playability yourself with simple diagnosis and tweaks won't just save you money, it'll help you play better. MusicNomad's new Precision Fret Rocker and Fret Gauge Kit makes checking your fret, pickup and string height easy. Made of stainless steel, you can trust both to give accurate assessments and measurements of your settings, and the instructions for both are printed on the tools themselves!

$39.99

www.musicnomadcare.com

ERNIE BALL PARADIGM GUITAR STRINGS

2 String king Ernie Ball has added three new sets to its life-prolonging Paradigm Slinky range of guitar strings. Now available in Primo (9.5-44), Ultra (10-48) and Burly (11-52) gauges, EB's Paradigm features high-strength steel and patented reinforcement at the ball-end, but more importantly is coated in EB's Everlast nanotreatment to help prevent corrosion and debris build-up. Available now from your favourite Ernie Ball stockist.

£21.69

ernieball.co.uk

MXR WYLDE AUDIO

3 It's been 20 years since MXR launched its first signature product with Zakk Wylde, and it's marking the occasion with refreshed versions of the MXR Wylde Audio Chorus (£167.99), Phase (£132.99) and Overdrive (£144.99). These are the same circuits we know and love, but now come with updated graphics based around expanded Zakk's buzzsaw/bullseye design. "They've been on my pedalboard forever." says Zakk. "This is definitely all the ingredients I needed to make the soup!"

From £132.99

www.jimdunlop.com

STRYMON ULTRAVIOLET

4 Strymon is going psychedelic for its latest pedal, the Ultraviolet Vintage Vibe. Combining chorus and vibrato (either individually or simultaneously), the Ultraviolet promises to inject a '60s swirl into your rig via speed, intensity and volume controls. There's a three-position Bias toggle for fine-tuning the pedal's sweep, and another to select the chorus/vibrato/blend modes. It works in stereo, has MIDI connectivity, and you can also plug in an expression pedal.

£259.99

www.strymon.net

BOSS KATANA AIR EX

5 The 2018 Katana Air was Boss' first practice amp with wireless connectivity, and now it's been updated with even more features. Boss has upped the number of effects to 60 and added wireless editing via the Boss Tone Studios app (over Bluetooth). There's increased power from 30 to 35 watts, increased stereo driver sizes from three-inch to five, a redesigned bass-ported cabinet, wood construction and a more luxurious leather handle.

£539

www.boss.info

SHERGOLD TELSTAR STANDARD ST14 £379

The '70s Brit-brand drops a new boutique-style solidbody at a very tempting price

Don't worry if you've never heard of Shergold. No, we're not talking about that race horse that went missing, but a minor-league brand, headed by Jack Golder, that built guitars in the UK from 1975 to 1982. At the time they were well-liked and famous users include Bernard Sumner and Peter Hook.

Fast-forward to 2017 and UK distributor Barnes & Mullins – the company behind Faith acoustics – re-launched Shergold with the new Masquerader designed by top UK-guitar maker Patrick James Eggle. Another more mainstream design dropped in 2019, the Provocateur. These Indonesian-made designs, featuring various Seymour Duncan pickup configurations, and initially rosewood, then mahogany necks are still available and start just below £800. For this year, however, in an attempt to kick-start the brand yet again, there's a new model that comes from China, is under half the price of those now-called Custom Series models, and is once again designed by Mr Eggle.

"I'm very proud of the Custom series," says Barnes & Mullins' owner and MD, Brian Cleary, whose idea it was to bring back Shergold in the first place. "I think they still represent very good value for money but to achieve more mass appeal, it was obvious we needed to look at a lower price. It was a good year and half ago that we started the conversation with Patrick to get the design going."

Well, it's a fine slice of boutique-style design: a slightly offset T-style with a Gibson Firebird-like raised centre and echoes of Fender's Cabronita Telecaster with its pair of Gretsch-like humbuckers. Two fetching opaque and quite retro colours are offered and you'll still get plenty of change from £400. The good news is that this so-called Telstar is the first of a new Standard Series for Shergold; by the time you read this there'll be a low-cost version of that Provocateur at £409 with more designs promised.

But there's no shortage of solidbody electrics at this price point, Squier being the obvious market-leaders, so, really, why on earth should we be interested here? Let's take a closer look.

> PERFORMS ABOVE ITS PRICE POINT IN SOUNDS AND STYLE

As you'd expect, the design is based around the classic 25.5-inch Fender scale length. The slab-sawn maple neck has a pretty credible 'slim C' profile that's more palm-filling than it sounds, and a milk-chocolate coloured laurel fingerboard with vibrant laminated abalone dots. Importantly, that feel is enhanced with lightly rolled edges to the fingerboard and very good fret work from a quite wide and low wire that on the 12-inch radiused face makes for a seriously good player. The heel is nicely rounded, too, and the neck screws sit in

Photography Phil Barker

1 CONSTRUCTION CHANGES

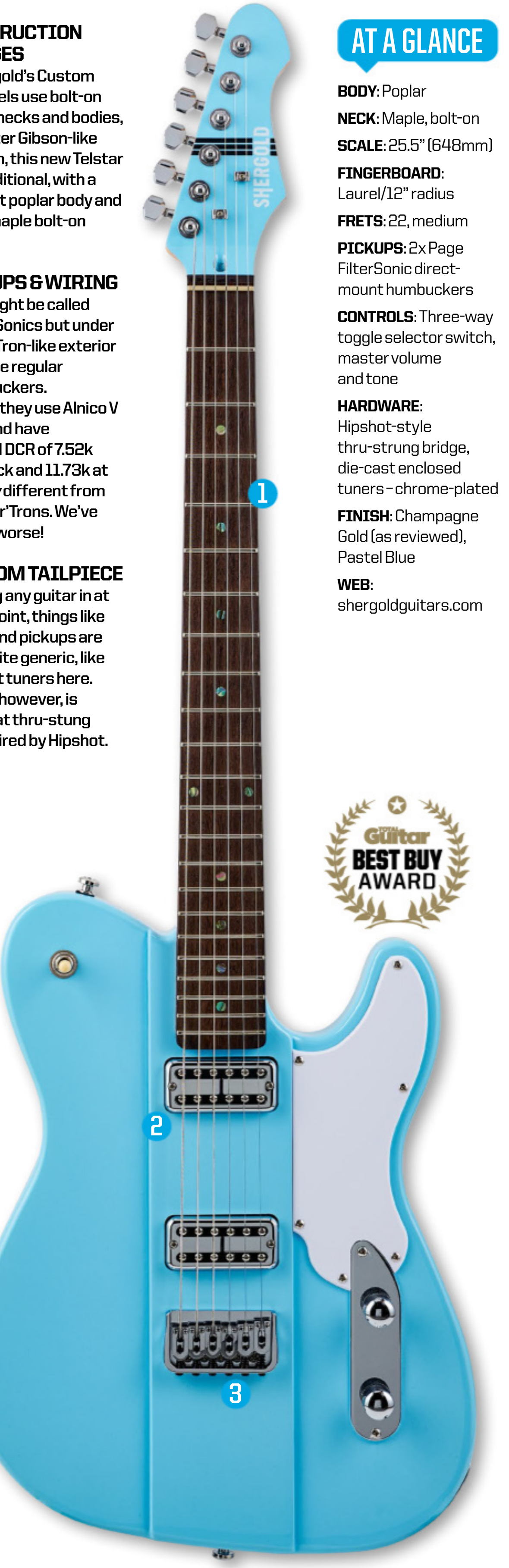
While Shergold's Custom Series models use bolt-on mahogany necks and bodies, plus a shorter Gibson-like scale length, this new Telstar is more traditional, with a good weight poplar body and 25.5-inch maple bolt-on neck.

2 PICKUPS & WIRING

They might be called Page FilterSonics but under their Filter'Tron-like exterior they're more regular mini-humbuckers. Apparently they use Alnico V magnets and have a measured DCR of 7.52k ohms at neck and 11.73k at bridge: *very* different from proper Filter'Trons. We've heard a lot worse!

3 CUSTOM TAILPIECE

To bring any guitar in at this price-point, things like hardware and pickups are typically quite generic, like the die-cast tuners here. The bridge, however, is a rather neat thru-stung design inspired by Hipshot.



Total Guitar BEST BUY AWARD

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Poplar

NECK: Maple, bolt-on

SCALE: 25.5" (648mm)

FINGERBOARD: Laurel/12" radius

FRETS: 22, medium

PICKUPS: 2x Page FilterSonic direct-mount humbuckers

CONTROLS: Three-way toggle selector switch, master volume and tone

HARDWARE: Hipshot-style thru-strung bridge, die-cast enclosed tuners – chrome-plated

FINISH: Champagne Gold (as reviewed), Pastel Blue

WEB: shergoldguitars.com

recessed cupped washers. Thanks to the poplar body, weight is good at 7.25lb and even unplugged there's a good resonant ring to the guitar's response.

Plug in and you don't quite get the sound that those pickups suggest. These are more standard humbucking than true Filter'Tron and there's no mistaking a more mini-humbucker-like voice, certainly at neck, where there's good clarity and depth. At the bridge there's more heat and midrange growl, perfect for some 60s garage and dirty rock 'n' roll. With both on, we're treated to some expected jangle that hints at a rounder Rickenbacker-style voice. It plays great and has three strong sounds, while the humbucking nature means hum isn't a problem for recording or high-gain.

But there's got to be a catch, right? Yes, the tuners are rather generic, but, to be fair, don't feel bad because that's contrasted by the good-looking, thru-strung bridge which might be a knock-off of a higher-end Hipshot design, but it not only matches the look of those pickups, it's a pretty credible piece. "It's a cool design that was simply available to the manufacturers for the right money," confirms Patrick. "We could have gone with a more traditional chopped T-style bridge, but these bridges are great: they look good and are pretty solid." Again, the low cost means the pickups, with an invented Page brand-name, are off the shelf Chinese-made lookalikes.

But low-cost, certainly in this case, doesn't mean low performance. In a market area that is awash with no-name copies and lookalikes, this Shergold Telstar comes across as a breath of fresh air: a familiar-yet-original design that performs well above its price in both playability, sound and style.

Dave Burrluck

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★⯪
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★⯪

Design Rules

Patrick James Eggle's previous designs for Shergold shouldn't be over-looked

When Barnes & Mullins re-launched Shergold in 2017, they used the name of an original '70s model, the Masquerader, but entrusted Patrick James Eggle to completely re-design it. Initially it came with a solid rosewood neck that later switched to mahogany. It's a unique-looking double-cut design based on a Gibson-like scale length with aluminium line inlays on the ebony fingerboard but with either a chopped, or full-size T-style thru-strung bridge. Four pickup configurations are available, all from Seymour Duncan: HH, SSS, HSS and HS. The later 2019 Provocateur continued the style but with a single-cut outline and either HH or HS pickup configurations. These Indonesian Custom Series guitars start at £765.

ALSO TRY...

GRETSCH G2215-P90 STREAMLINER JUNIOR JET CLUB £319

It's not a T-style, but this single-cut bolt-on solidbody has bags of retro style with a Broad'Tron BT-2S humbucker and a P90 soapbar at neck.

SQUIER PARANORMAL CABRONITA TELE THINLINE £389

With a pair of Fender-Designed Alnico Jazzmaster single-coil pickups, the semi-solid Cabronita changes the Tele recipe. There's also a baritone version at £405 with P-90-style soapbars.

JOE DOE BY VINTAGE GAS JOCKEY £799

This offshoot of Vintage's main lines is another that uses that raised centre on its offset, double-cut single-bound body. Yes, it's a higher price point but quite the looker in Sparkling Gold Sand.

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www.classicrockmagazine.com

Words Matt Owen Photography Olly Curtis/Phil Barker

SQUIER SONIC SERIES

The Bullet is back – but is it better than before?

Back in April, Fender made guitar fans across the globe giddy with excitement with the announcement of the Squier Sonic range – a collection of Stratocasters, Telecasters, Mustangs and a handful of bass guitars that weighed in under £200. As a successor to the cult popular Bullet range, though, the Sonics had a lot to live up to.

Squier Bullet guitars were widely regarded as some of the best affordable guitars money could by, and represented both a solid choice for first-time guitarists, and a well-priced platform for more seasoned strummers to either obtain some Fender feel or put their modding abilities to the test without worrying about expensive overheads.

So, like we say, a lot to live up to, because while the Bullets were irresistibly cheap, their individual performances vastly outweighed their humble price tags. Mike Rutherford of Genesis, for example, took the Bullet Strat on an arena tour not too long ago.

Fender has sought to continue the Bullet's legacy with a new generation of electrics, which comprises all the classic Squier shapes you'd expect, as well as some new faces in the form of the Esquire, and a sole humbucker-equipped Stratocaster.

Here, we put four Squier Sonic models through their paces to find out whether Fender's most affordable entry-level guitar family is actually any good, or whether the whole thing is just a load of snake oil. Spoiler alert: it's the former.

SQUIER SONIC STRATOCASTER HT

£155

The Squier Sonic Stratocaster's predecessor made quite the name for itself back in 2021 when Mike Rutherford revealed he'd been lugging a Squier Bullet Strat around for Genesis' tour. Is its successor arena-worthy? Well, with a bit of a setup, we genuinely see no reason why not.

It's snappy, vibrant and resonant, and the Torino Red poplar body (used over the standard alder) gives it a lighter, airier vibe that really suits unplugged playing. The maple neck is a comfortable C-profile that feels familiarly playable. The guitar also held its own when plugged into a Fender Blues Junior. The neck pickup was warm and hefty, and excelled with Hendrixian and SRV styles when fed through a Tube Screamer-style drive. Positions three and four gave nice amounts of responsive clean quack à la Cory Wong, and though the bridge pickup was a tad fizzy, it would be very harsh to be over-critical of the budget guitar when it has otherwise passed all tests with flying colours.

Of course, the Sonic is realistically an entry-point range, so talk of arenas and world tours may be premature – but, if anything, that just makes this whole discussion easier. For first-time players or those looking to add a Strat to their arsenal without breaking the bank, it really doesn't come much better than this. There is a tremolo-equipped version for those wanting a more traditional Strat experience, but this hardtail iteration seems to be an ideal, no-nonsense, low-maintenance workhorse that emerged from our rigorous playing test unscathed.

As you'd expect with a £155 guitar, it isn't perfect – the volume and tone pots were just a little too stiff for our liking, and the pickups could be better – but it comes very close to being a flawless sub-£200 instrument. If Rutherford ever needs to retire the Bullet, we know exactly which Squier he should be reaching for next.

SQUIER SONIC STRATOCASTER HT H

£155

Fender recently revived Tom DeLonge's cult classic signature guitar, but many aspiring strummers and Blink-182 fans keen to get their hands on it were unfortunately priced out of a move thanks to the fact the limited-edition single-humbucker Strat weighed in at a hefty £1,299. Well, for just over a tenth of that price, Squier has presented a seriously impressive alternative in the form of the Sonic Stratocaster HT H.

Since it's been gutted of two thirds of its electronics, the guitar is very light, and is made lighter by virtue of the body of the guitar seeming to be that of a standard Strat – in other words, it's got room under the hood for some more pickups. Not only does that contribute to its weight, it also makes it far more resonant, with an impressive unplugged projection. Pair that with the silky smooth C-shape neck and you're in for a blast.

As you could probably tell, there isn't much to this model, but that doesn't stop it being a genuinely fun instrument to play. Like the Strat HT, the workmanship is impressive, and the guitar copes will when put through its paces at the top end of the fretboard. Given the guitar's simplistic construction, though, there's a lot riding on that sole ceramic humbucker to deliver tones that can sell the whole package. And while it's not quite DeLonge's Seymour Duncan Invader, it's a respectable unit at this price point. Warm and hearty when clean, and delivering some singing high-gains when paired with a number of our Line 6 effects.

It's worth noting that low-budget Squier models are widely regarded as top-notch modding platforms, or guinea pig guitars to test some DIY luthiering, and the HT H is no exception. Indeed, if we were to pick one of these beauts up, our first move would be to swap out that humbucker for a more premium pickup. Otherwise, we wouldn't change a thing.

SQUIER SONIC TELECASTER

£159

No Squier range is complete without a Telecaster, and here the quota has been filled by the poplar-bodied Sonic iteration of Fender's single-cut. Though available in an assortment of finishes and a choice of fretboard materials, our example takes on a decidedly '50s flavor thanks to its no-nonsense Black finish and maple fingerboard.

It's a similar story to the Sonic Strat – an authentic Tele experience with some adjustments to wrestle that price down to the sub-£200 mark. Weighing in with Fender's standard 25.5" scale length, with 9.5" radius, and a 21-fret maple fingerboard, the lighter-than-usual guitar is just as delightful to navigate as the Strat, with the C-shape satin urethane maple neck lending itself to some especially slick fretting transitions.

While the pickups may be a tad on the glassy side for some, this particular, er, sonic characteristic is arguably better implemented here than in the Strat HT's circuit – and the prominent highs lend themselves to some authentic Tele snaps. And, of course, the highs of both ceramic single coils can be tamed through the responsive tone knob, which works alongside a master volume parameter and a three-way toggle switch. While the neck coil excelled in our Jason Isbell-inspired country experiments, the bridge pickup performed admirably when asked to deal out some more high-gain riffs.

A more modern six-saddle bridge sees the guitar further depart from its '50s vibe, but this appointment will merely make the whole package easier to maintain, set up and play – especially for beginners – than if it were to pack a three-saddle alternative.

There's a common thread emerging from this string of mini-reviews, and it's that the Sonic series might be a serious upgrade from the Bullets, and that these might just be the best value-for-money Fender guitars you'll ever get your hands on.

SQUIER SONIC MUSTANG HH

£149

We raved about the original Squier Bullet Mustang when it was doing the rounds a few years ago, and now the short-scale six-string is back in Sonic form. But is it good enough to rival what some people were calling the king of beginner offsets? Well, if our ultra-cool Flash Pink, maple fretboard-equipped, dual humbucker-loaded example is anything to go by, the signs are very promising indeed.

With a 24" scale length and compact offset body, for us, this was the most fun Sonic to play during our in-depth test run (conveniently, it's also the most affordable!) with the shorter dimensions, C-shape satin urethane maple neck and 9.5" radius maple fingerboard resulting in a genuinely joyous playing experience. The poplar body, drafted in over the Bullet's basswood, is, again, supremely light and comfortable, both sitting and standing, and adds a nice resonant snap to complement the shorter scale.

This one features a pair of ceramic Squier humbuckers, though there is a double single-coil option available for those who prefer more of a traditional indie rock vibe. These humbuckers are more than capable of channeling indie rock, but it's when a bit of dirt is introduced to the signal chain for something a little more grungier and heavier that this guitar comes to life. And when dialed back to clean the neck pickup offers up some pleasing warm depth.

Perhaps because of its shorter scale length, the build quality and setup isn't quite up to the standards of the 25.5" models above, and the Mustang didn't fare quite as well in the bending and fretting tests, with some upper frets choking out when soloing. However, that's potentially just a pro setup away from being rectified, and the presence of a more sturdy block saddle bridge certainly feels like an upgrade in the hardware department.

FINAL VERDICT

Which Sonic will you choose?

All in all, the Squier Sonic range looks to be a seriously impressive collection of guitars, which will provide beginners and accomplished players alike with the opportunity to try out Fender-style instruments at an accessible price point. Build quality, playability and tones across the board were just about bang on the money, and with a little TLC – and perhaps some experimental DIY modding – these builds would easily hold their own against more expensive instruments.

SQUIER SONIC STRATOCASTER HT

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★⯨
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★⯨
USABILITY	★★★★⯨
OVERALL RATING	★★★★⯨

SQUIER SONIC STRATOCASTER HT H

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★⯨☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★⯨
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★⯨
USABILITY	★★★★★
OVERALL RATING	★★★★⯨

AT A GLANCE

STRAT HT

BODY: Poplar
NECK: Maple
NECK PROFILE: "C" shape
FINGERBOARD RADIUS: 9.5"
FRETS: Narrow Tall
PICKUPS: 3 x Ceramic Single-Coil
CONTROLS: Master Volume, Tone 1 (Neck/Middle), Tone 2 (Bridge), Five-Way Blade Switch
FINISH: Torino Red

TELE

BODY: Poplar
NECK: Maple
NECK PROFILE: "C" shape
FINGERBOARD RADIUS: 9.5"
FRETS: Narrow Tall
Pickups: 2 x Ceramic Single-Coil
CONTROLS: Master Volume, Master Tone, Three-Position Blade Switch
FINISH: Black

STRAT HT H

BODY: Poplar
NECK: Maple
NECK PROFILE: "C" shape
FINGERBOARD RADIUS: 9.5"
FRETS: Narrow Tall
PICKUPS: Ceramic Humbucker
CONTROLS: Master Volume, Master Tone
FINISH: Flash Pink

MUSTANG HH

BODY: Poplar
NECK: Maple
NECK PROFILE: "C" shape
FINGERBOARD RADIUS: 9.5"
FRETS: Narrow Tall
PICKUPS: 2 x Ceramic Humbucker
CONTROLS: Master Volume, Master Tone, Three-Position Toggle
FINISH: Flash Pink

TELECASTER
Squier

MUSTANG
Squier

SQUIER SONIC TELECASTER

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★⯨
USABILITY	★★★★⯨
OVERALL RATING	★★★★⯨

SQUIER SONIC STRATOCASTER MUSTANG HH

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★☆
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★☆
USABILITY	★★★★⯨
OVERALL RATING	★★★★⯨

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Delay Machine
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2
3
4
MEMORY
(WRITE: HOLD)
TAP DIVISION
(LOCK: HOLD)
TRI
DOT
MOD RATE
MOD DEPTH
VARIATION
DELAY TIME
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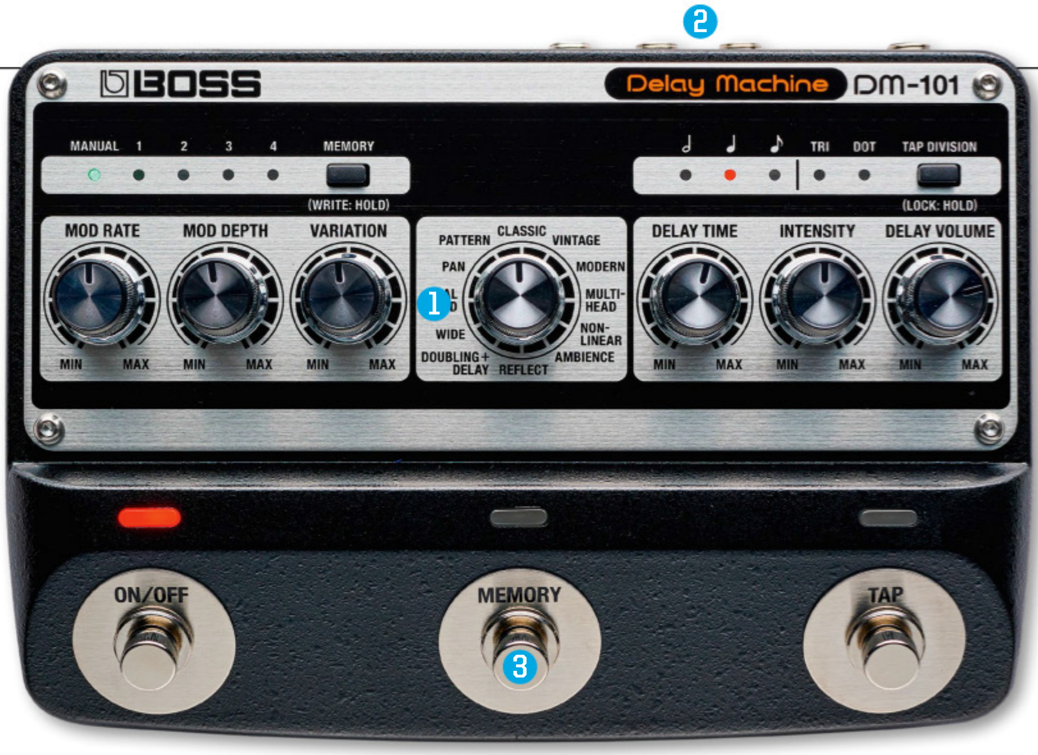


BOSS DM-101 DELAY MACHINE £449

Total Guitar BEST BUY AWARD

Vintage analogue delay like you've never heard before

Bucket-brigade analogue delay came into its own some 40-odd years ago, when tape echo manufacturing was phasing out and affordable digital delay was yet to come on stream. But it's still with us, as guitar players are suckers for the tonal quality of its repeats and the way that the decay blends so naturally with guitar tone. The new DM-101 from Boss uses eight BBD chips under digital control to put that sound into new contexts.

> AN ADVANCED EXPRESSION OF ANALOGUE DELAY

The pedal has a straightforward user interface with no menus to navigate – you choose one of 12 modes (six mono/six stereo) and set up your delay time, feedback and dry/wet mix with three knobs. There's also a Tap Tempo footswitch, with several tap divisions available. Besides these, there's a 'Variation' knob that adjusts a unique parameter for the selected mode plus modulation that can be dialled in with Rate and Depth knobs. Your favourite settings can be stored and recalled via four onboard memory slots, but if you use MIDI you can expand this to 127.

'Classic' mode may be your first port of call, as it will cover just about all standard delay tasks with its maximum delay time of 1200ms and warm repeats that melt into you sound. Similar is 'Vintage' mode, which is an emulation of the classic DM-2 pedal with a shorter, true-to-the-original maximum delay of just 300ms. If you want the repeats just a little sharper with more top end clarity, there's a 'Modern' mode. If you wish to add modulation to any of the modes it's suitably lush, as might be expected from Boss, with plenty of variation whether you need a light dusting of chorus or a more intense rotary speaker-style treatment. Of the three other mono modes, 'Non-Linear' and the reverb-like 'Ambience' offer useful variations on the theme, but it's the 'Multi-Head' mode's emulation of a tape delay with four heads that stands out as special – 10 different head patterns available from the Variation knob getting you into Space Echo territory. The stereo modes still have valid uses in mono, but in a stereo rig or a recording situation they really open things up, delivering a more expansive implementation of that analogue sound with such things as offset left and right delay times, panned delays with different delay times distributed across the sound field and plenty more to explore.

Players have got used to the extra versatility provided by a multi-mode digital delay with its wider range of sounds, and now they can have the same with their favoured analogue sound. The flexibility provided by digital control makes the DM-101 the most advanced expression of analogue delay currently available.

Trevor Curwen

SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
USABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

Photography Olly Curtis

1 MODE/PARAMETER KNOBS

Choose your mode (six mono and six stereo) with the rotary mode switch and tweak one parameter unique to that mode with the Variation knob.

2 OUTPUT JACKS

You can run in mono or use both outputs together for left and right effects (with or without dry sound), or as one dry and one wet.

3 MEMORY FOOTSWITCH

Use this to access the onboard presets. The switch scrolls one way – through manual mode (green LED) then through the four memories (red LEDs).

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Analog delay

FEATURES: Buffered bypass, 127 user memories, 4 instantly accessible onboard presets, Tap Tempo, modulation, optional trails, 10ms to 1200ms delay time. MIDI clock sync and Program Change, expression pedal parameter control

CONTROLS: Mod Rate, Mod Depth, Variation, Mode selector, Delay Time, Intensity, Delay Volume, Memory button, Tap Division button, Bypass footswitch, Memory footswitch, Tap footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard outputs (A/Mono, B), standard CTL 1, 2/EXP, MIDI In, MIDI Out, USB

POWER: Supplied 9V DC adaptor 260mA

DIMENSIONS: 192 (w) x 133 (d) x 52 mm (h)

RHYTHM
TREBLE

GIBSON LES PAUL STANDARD ’50S PLAIN TOP INVERNESS GREEN

£2,599

Gibson’s poster child gets a bonnie upgrade with the Custom Color Series

Like the elusive Nessie, this Gibson colourway is a rather rare sighting in the wild. But don’t worry, you don’t need to dive into the deepest, darkest depths of Loch Ness to find one, as the new Custom Color Series brings this fan-favourite finish to the ’50s-inspired Les Paul Standard. While the Nashville guitar giant is more associated with breath-taking bursts and gilded Goldtops, Gibson has experimented with a vast array of finishes over the years - something this new series is looking to celebrate.

This particular model – Plain Top ’50s Standard – is available in a whopping six options, with the fiery Cardinal Red, dazzling Sparkling Burgundy, icey Pelham Blue and, of course, the bonnie Inverness Green being the standout players.

Inverness Green has long been a firm favourite of this reviewer – There’s something about the bluey-green hue that complements Gibson’s classic shapes so well. Whether on the tricked-out Kirk Douglas Signature SG or this singlecut beauty, this colour always looks good. That said, there is a fair amount of variation in shades when it comes to Inverness Green. Sometimes, a model can lean more towards green, while others resemble the cherished Pelham Blue.

In the case of our example, it’s definitely more in the blue camp – and that is most definitely not a complaint. We actually love the way this guitar looks and we’re hoping Gibson will be making it available on other models. Let’s see this finish on an Explorer!

Moving on to the playability, it’s a fairly standard affair if you’re used to Gibson’s ’50s profile. The neck here is chunky but most definitely manageable and is equally comfortable for first-position chords, hard-rocking riffs, searing solos and beyond.

The fretwork is tidy, the binding has been well scraped, and every single note rings out with the assertiveness you only find on a well-made Les Paul. We’d say that’s a job well done.

The tonal centre of this LP is a pair of calibrated Burstbuckers whose Alnico 2 magnets deliver the full-bodied tone Gibson’s golden age guitars are known for. This Les Paul isn’t overly aggressive nor underwhelmingly meek. It has a near-perfect sonic balance, with plenty of depth in the lows, enough mids to cut through the noise and a pleasant top end to boot.

For us, the Custom Color Series is a refreshing change of pace for Gibson. Of course, we love Heritage Cherry Sunburst as much as anyone, but there is something exciting about a vintage-inspired guitar that keeps the retro specs where it counts while adding a twist in the form of a bold new look.

Daryl Robertson

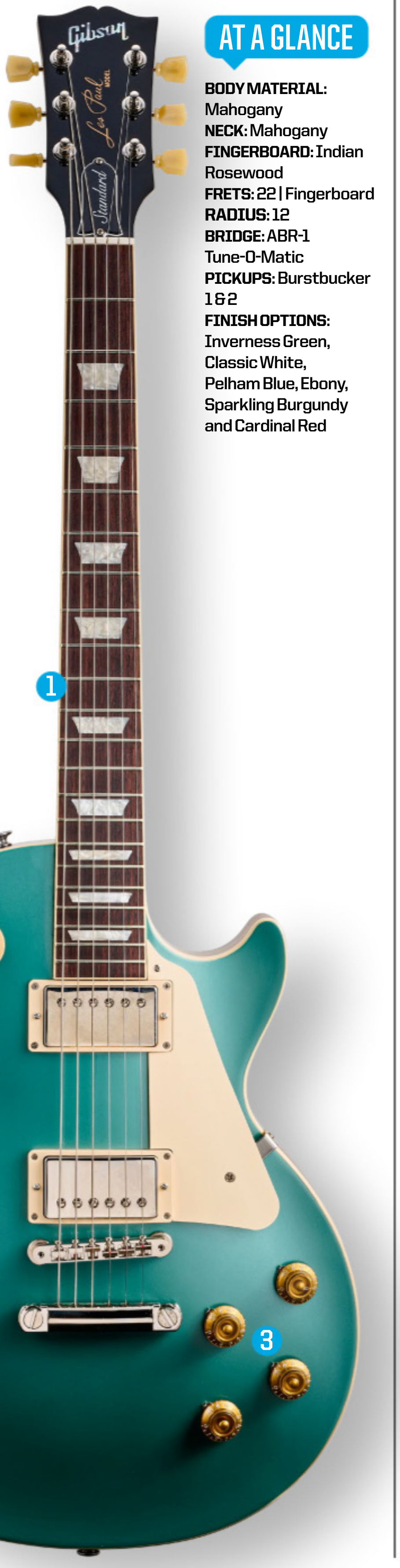
SUMMARY	
FEATURES	★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★☆
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★½
PLAYABILITY	★★★★½
OVERALL RATING	★★★★½

Photography Olly Curtis

1 NECK This neck may be thicker than the slim ’60s variant, but it isn’t any less playable. Rather, it’s reassuringly chunky and a joy to play.

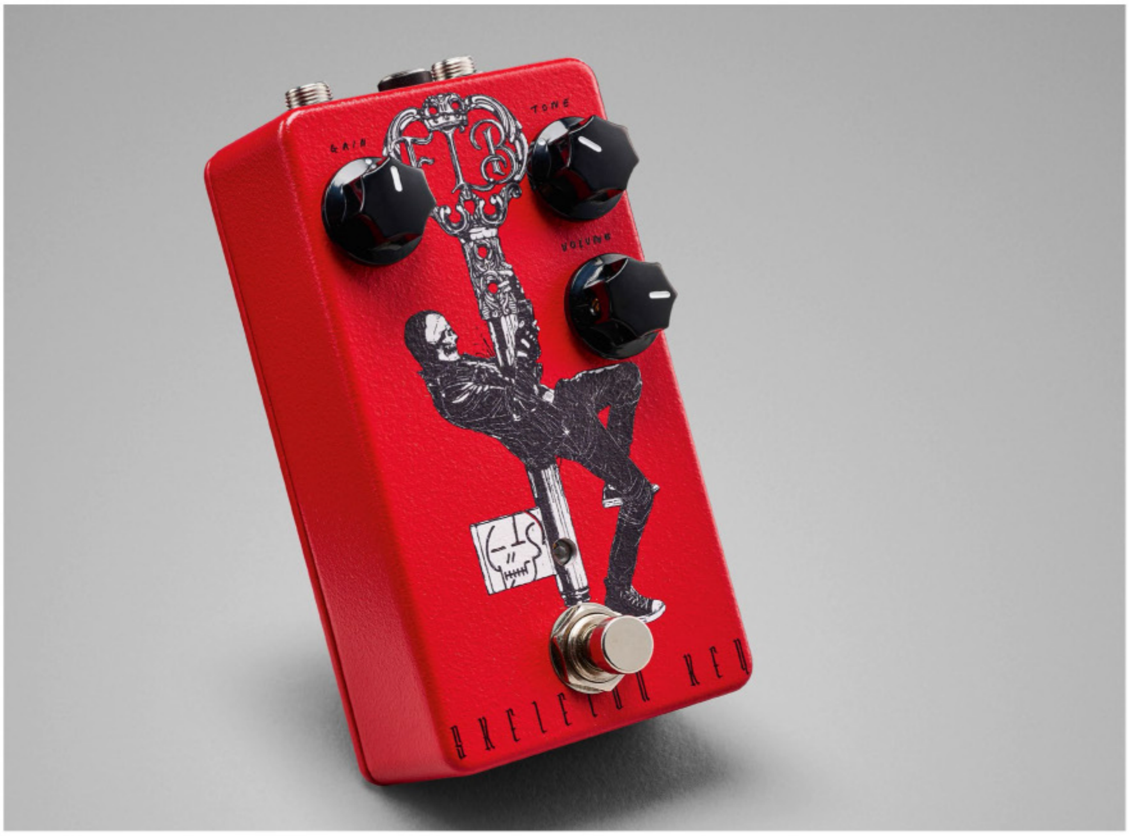
2 BODY You won’t find any weight relief hiding in here. So, if you find old LPs cumbersome, you may want to seek out the modern variation.

3 CONTROLS Favourably, Gibson has gone back to basics with a hand-wired control loom featuring Orange Drop capacitors and high-quality pots.



AT A GLANCE

BODY MATERIAL: Mahogany
NECK: Mahogany
FINGERBOARD: Indian Rosewood
FRETS: 22 | Fingerboard
RADIUS: 12
BRIDGE: ABR-1 Tune-O-Matic
PICKUPS: Burstbucker 1 & 2
FINISH OPTIONS: Inverness Green, Classic White, Pelham Blue, Ebony, Sparkling Burgundy and Cardinal Red



FUNNY LITTLE BOXES SKELETON KEY £99

Queen of the Tone Age

You might remember Funny Little Boxes for its excellent 1991 pedal, which delivers the sound of Pearl Jam's *Ten* in a box. Well, now, FLB founder Andy Ilgunas and YouTube channel Let's Play All's Matt Webster have once again collaborated, with their sights set on recreating one of modern rock's most revered, yet hard-to-approximate guitar tones: Queens Of The Stone Age.

That's quite a blanket description given Josh Homme's blueprint has graced eight studio albums and dozens of side-project releases. So which is the Skeleton Key gunning for? Well, it's a fitting name, because the answer is simultaneously all of them and none of them. Instead, this op-amp-based distortion is designed to capture the overall vibe of Josh Homme's clandestine, cleaner-than-you-might-think sound: part overdrive, part fuzz, all down-tuned and instantly recognisable character. There are three controls, and while you might expect some esoteric descriptions, FLB has kept it to simple tradition: Gain, Volume and Tone. The Skeleton Key features one input, one output, and a power jack, and to cap it off, has enlisted official QOTSA artist Boneface to create the Skeleton Key Graphic that adorns the front.

We fed the Skeleton Key humbuckers and single coils, with our guitars tuned to C standard, drop C and standard tuning, and the results are oddly uncanny. Crucial to the Skeleton Key's sound is its gain range, which, while labelled distortion is closer in terms of saturation levels to a heavy overdrive. However there's a layer of aggression to it which takes it away from sounding like another OG OD circuit. First, it's dynamic, responding to our guitar's volume with versatility. Second, you'll get a totally usable range of sounds out of the full travel of the controls – even with everything maxed out it maintains its clarity and throaty growl thanks to it never reaching white-hot molten gain levels. It's actually quite a strange experience, in that with the output pushing at a decent level and beyond, the QOTSA flavour remains throughout. This leaves you with the tone and gain controls as your seasoning without leaving the desert. The saying goes that tone is all in the hands, but in this case, you can place a large percentage of it at your feet.

Stuart Williams

SUMMARY

FEATURES	★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★
VALUE FOR MONEY	★★★★½
BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★
USABILITY	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Boost/Drive pedal

FEATURES: Buffered Bypass, 7 different clipping options (OA10, 1N270, 1N695, 1N34A, D9B, D9E, Red LEDs), DI output

CONTROLS: Output, Treble, Gain, Clipping selector, DI Groundlift switch, Bypass footswitch, Clipping footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, standard DI output

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied) <100mA

DIMENSIONS: 72 (w) x 110 (d) x 45 mm (h)

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Words Ellie Rogers Photo Sara Messinger

HOTLINE TNT

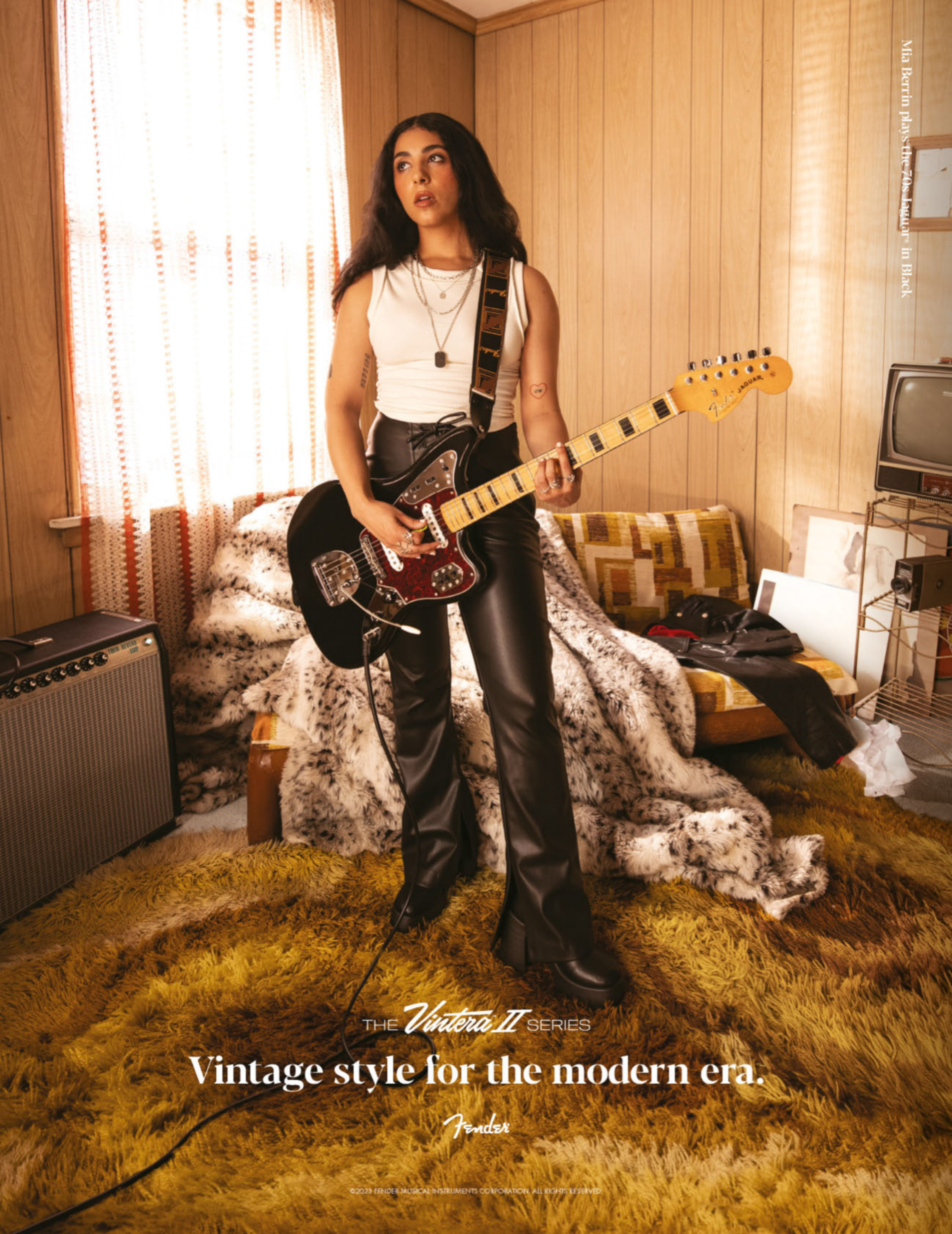
Hailing from New York and freshly signed to Jack White's Third Man Records for the release of sophomore album *Cartwheel*, Hotline TNT are a shoegaze-inspired outfit with a big difference. The brainchild of multi-instrumentalist and songwriter Will Anderson (formerly of Vancouver DIY duo Weed), they create densely layered noise-pop, with a heavy My Bloody Valentine, Teenage Fanclub and Dinosaur Jr. influence, using next to nothing in the way of pedals and effects.

"I think there's a lot of shoegaze bands right now that just sound like a wash or a blur," says Will, who doesn't believe in reverb, doesn't own a delay, and who only breaks out the distortion pedal when one of his preferred amps – a solid-state Randall half-stack, a Roland Jazz Chorus or a Peavey Bandit – aren't available. "I firmly believe that the band should sound good no matter what gear is around," he stresses. "Obviously we need distortion, so if there's none on the amp, I'll relent and use a [ProCo] RAT pedal. But, if possible, it's a tuner and that's it."

Instead, the wall of tones that towers high and stretches wide on *Cartwheel* was built from an array of guitars with distinct sonics and a belief that it's always better to have "double of everything". Pressed into just about every track, you'll hear twin acoustic guitars, doubled-up clean and distorted electrics, layers of 12-string and "a track or two of bendy My Bloody Valentine-style guitars" for good measure. "I could always do more," smiles Will, who tracks everything in the studio himself, but relies on two additional guitarists to bring his music to life on stage. "Most people think three guitarists is a lot, but to me, it's the minimum. A lot of the time we're playing the exact same chords and riffs, but it sounds way thicker and heavier that way."

Anyone with a nervous disposition or a precious attitude towards the treatment of guitars might want to look away when Will busts out his trademark whammy-less whammy technique, which involves applying pressure to the body of his Japanese-made Yamaha SG-3 while pushing the neck forward to achieve a DIY pitch-drop effect. "I don't know if we invented that technique," he ponders, having been at it since his tenure in Weed. "We didn't have whammy bars, but we loved the warping sound and it was not lost on me that it looked pretty cool to do it."

While the Yamaha has withstood being manhandled for over a decade, others haven't been so lucky. "I've tried it on an Epiphone SG," he confesses, "but that's completely demolished now as a result!"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